

A Communication Framework for Public Participation in Municipal Development Initiatives

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts of the University of Stellenbosch.



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April 2004

Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature.

Date

ABSTRACT

It is a reality that public participation processes in local government do not yield the outcomes that reveal a fully optimised process. Communication is the lifeblood of any development initiative (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1996:1) and is one way of breaking the isolation of people. By having the ability to communicate (i.e. to reach and to be reached) people can truly have a say in matters shaping their current and future reality.

The objectives of this thesis were to explore the communication short falls hindering effective participation in local government, and also to provide a practical implementation framework aimed at guiding municipalities in communication with the view to enhance public participation. This was accomplished by way of a literature study and an analysis of the West Coast District (WCD) Communication and Participation Project (2003).

In Chapter 1 the thesis topic was introduced and the background to the thesis, the research problem, the design and methodology, as well as the outline of the chapters was explained. In Chapter 2 the key concepts of this thesis were discussed and included sustainable development, public participation and communication. This selection of concepts is justified by the argument that communication supports public participation, which will in turn promote sustainable development.

A description of the WCD Project (2003) findings was provided in Chapter 3, which was followed by an analyses and interpretation of the WCD Project findings in Chapter 4. During the analyses a number of observations were made. Firstly, there is a distinct relationship between communication, public participation and sustainable development. Communication facilitates information sharing which supports informed decision-making during public participation. The latter in turn is vital in establishing sustainable development.

Secondly, there should be distinguished between community communication and corporate communication. Dealing with the local community requires a unique approach to communication, which varies from the communication approach followed by the internal administration of the municipality.

Thirdly, local communities should be consulted to identify and communicate their unique communication needs, issues and perspectives as they have unique knowledge of their own local challenges. These inputs from the community cause for powerful communication content and messages key to successful participation and to sustainable development.

Fourthly, that the perceptions as expressed by community members, embody their unique and specific communication needs. By converting and translating community perceptions into community needs positive motivation for public participation could be created.

Based on the findings of the analyses and interpretation of the WCD Project findings, a communication framework aimed at enhancing participation was developed in Chapter 5. The framework focussed on guiding the implementation of communication and participation when embarking on development initiatives.

OPSOMMING

Dit is 'n realiteit dat openbare deelname prosesse in plaaslike regering nie die uitkomst wat sprekend is van 'n optimale proses lewer nie. Kommunikasie is die lewens aar van enige ontwikkelingsinisiatief (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1996:1) en word beskou as een manier om die isolasie van mense verbreek. Deur die vermoë te hê om te kan kommunikeer (om uit te reik en bereik te kan word), kan mense werklik seggenskap hê in aangeleenthede wat hul huidige en toekomstige realiteit beïnvloed.

Die doelwitte van hierdie tesis was om die kommunikasie tekortkominge wat effektiewe deelname in plaaslike regering verhinder te ondersoek en ook om 'n praktiese implementeringsraamwerk wat daarop gemik is om munisipaliteite te lei rakende kommunikasie, met die oog daarop om openbare deelname te bevorder. Dit is bereik deur middel van 'n literatuurstudie en 'n analise van die Weskus Distrik (WD) Kommunikasie en Deelname Projek (2003).

In Hoofstuk 1 was die tesis onderwerp bekend gestel en die agtergrond van die tesis, die navorsingsprobleem, die onderwerp sowel as die raamwerk van die hoofstukke is verduidelik. In Hoofstuk 2 is die sleutel konsepte van die tesis bespreek wat volhoudbare ontwikkeling, openbare deelname en kommunikasie ingesluit het. Hierdie seleksie van konsepte word geregverdig deur die argument dat kommunikasie openbare deelname stimuleer, wat beurtelings volhoudbare ontwikkeling sal bevorder.

'n Beskrywing van die WD Projek bevindinge (2003) is in Hoofstuk 3 verskaf, en word gevolg deur 'n analise en interpretasie van die WK Projek bevindinge in Hoofstuk 4. Gedurende die analise van die WD Projek bevindinge is 'n aantal waarnemings gemaak. Eerstens, is daar 'n betekende verhouding tussen kommunikasie, openbare deelname en volhoudbare ontwikkeling. Kommunikasie fassiliteer die meedeel van informasie wat beurtelings ingeligde besluitneming

tydens openbare deelname bevorder. Laasgenoemde is krities in die vestiging van volhoudbare ontwikkeling.

Tweedens, moet daar 'n onderskeid getref word tussen gemeenskap kommunikasie en korporatiewe organisasie. Om met die gemeenskap te werk vereis 'n unieke benadering tot kommunikasie, wat verskil van die kommunikasie benadering wat gevolg word tyneds munisipale administrasie.

Derdens, plaaslike gemeenskappe behoort mee gekonsulteer te word om hul unieke kommunikasie behoeftes te identifiseer en te kan kommunikeer, omdat hulle kennis het van hul eie unieke plaaslike uitdagings. Hierdie insette van die gemeenskap dra by tot kragtige kommunikasie inhoud en boodskappe wat 'n sleutel rol speel in suksesvolle deelname en in volhoudbare ontwikkeling.

Vierdens, dat die persepsies soos bekryf deur gemeenskap lede, hul unieke en spesifieke kommunikasie behoeftes vergestalt. Deur die gemeenskap persepsies om te skakel in gemeenskap behoeftes, sal positiewe motivering rakende openbare deelname geskep kan word.

Op grond van die bevindinge rakende die analise en interpretasie van die WK Projek bevindinge, is 'n kommunikasie raamwerk wat gemik is op die verbetering van deelname ontwikkel in Hoofstuk 5. Die raamwerk is ingestel daarop om leiding te gee rakende die implementering van kommunikasie en deelname.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"If you have come to help me you can go home again. But if you see my struggle as part of your own survival then perhaps we can work together."

- Australian Aborigine Woman

(*Manilla Declaration on People's Participation and Sustainable Development* as cited in Korten, 1990:217-221)

1.1 BACKGROUND

The above quotation emphasise the basic need of individuals within communities to take charge/ ownership of their own development. It has been found that the sustainability of development activities is secured through public participation i.e. when people establish ownership, commitment and local management of development activities and initiatives (Kellerman, 1997:51).

Existing South African legislation requires local government to encourage and facilitate community participation, and also provides broad guidelines contributing towards the implementation thereof. Chapter 4 of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) stipulates that the duties of municipal councils include the encouragement of local communities to be involved in municipal affairs, as well as consultation with communities with regards to matters affecting them in a direct manner. One of the Constitutional objectives for local government is to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government (Act 108 of 1996).

The fact that legislation places a responsibility on municipalities to (i) encourage and create conditions for local communities to be involved, and (ii) that this involvement needs to be meaningful (i.e. encompass more than merely informing

communities of decisions). It is important to distinguish between involvement and meaningful participation. According to Swanepoel and De Beer (1998:22) involvement means to mobilise people for action that was not initiated by them. Meaningful participation affords people a measure of decision-making power and influence over their own matters (Kellerman, 1997:52). This presents South African municipalities with a significant challenge, namely the implementation of public participation. In order to implement participation processes, effective communication of information vital to such processes, is required. For the purposes of this thesis "involvement" will be used as meaning the same as "participation" unless expressly stated otherwise.

Section 18(1) of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2002 as cited in Provincial Administration of the Western Cape, 2003:11) emphasise the importance of good communication and information systems (which are integral to participation) when it requires municipalities to communicate information to communities concerning available mechanisms, processes and procedures to encourage and facilitate community participation.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The practical implementation of communication in developmental local government is currently challenging and problematic. Communication in local government does not serve its purpose and due to this public participation and ultimately sustainable development also suffers. The West Coast District (WCD) Project (*PricewaterhouseCoopers 2002, PricewaterhouseCoopers 2003*) that will be discussed in greater detail at a later stage of this thesis, clearly illustrates this reality. The project was instituted to address public participation short falls by focussing on the communication component of municipal administration and of community involvement. The aim was to improve participation by enabeling and strengthening the communication practices and aspects of the municipality and of its contact with the local community.

Currently communication in local government does not function optimally. This includes communicative interaction with the beneficiaries of municipal services, i.e. *community communication*, as well as the interaction about such beneficiaries, i.e. *corporate communication*. Corporate communication or municipal interaction about beneficiaries includes does not only include the communication within the municipality but also the communication of the municipality with other municipalities serving the same outcomes, as well as the communication with other state institutions and spheres of government for example provincial government. It is evident that there are communication gaps and the question remains how to address these gaps.

The research questions for this thesis can be formulated as follow:

- What are the communication shortcomings (or gaps) that will (once it has been addressed) improve public participation? Will corporate communication practices assist in the implementation of public participation in local government?
- What will be an appropriate and valid framework for communication that will (on its application) improve and enhance public participation?

The importance and ultimate value of this study can be highlighted as follow:

- Enabling officials to understand the significance of a needs-driven approach to communication with its beneficiaries (i.e. the broader community) and to involving its beneficiaries in municipal affairs;
- Enabling communities to effectively convey their needs and ideas (i.e. perceptions) to their local municipality; and
- The introduction of a framework for local municipalities with regards to communication.

1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This thesis entails a study relating to communication and its effect on participation in developmental local government. In the thesis the WCD Project is used as a case to explore a practical ("real-life") context where theory and observations regarding to communication and participation can be tested. The thesis will therefore investigate using the WCD Project in combination with other sources of information in an attempt to answer the above mentioned research questions. Diagram 1 illustrates the research design and methodology.

In the previously mentioned endeavour the following methodology was applied.

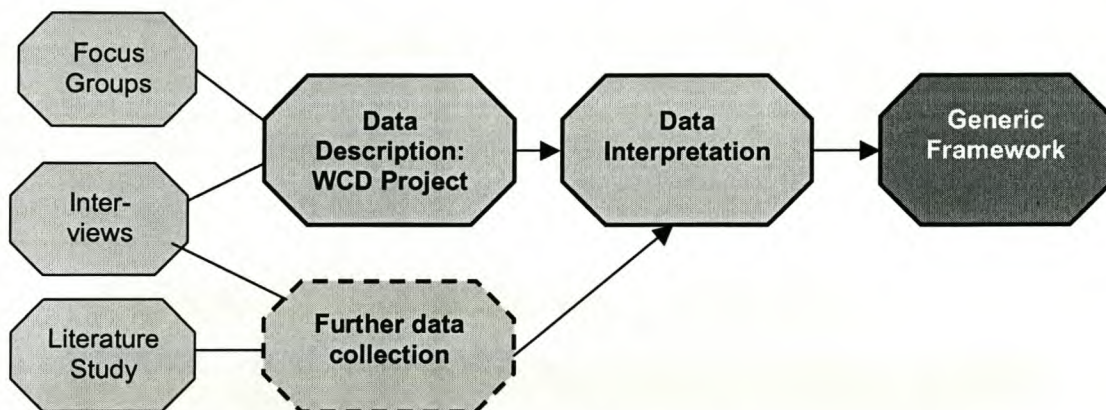


Diagram 1: The research design and methodology.

1.3.1 The WCD Project: Data Description

A description of the WCD Project included the following research activities:

1.3.1.1 Focus Groups

Focus group sessions were conducted in various towns in the WCD. A focus group included a discussion session with a number of inhabitants and a co-ordinator (the latter being responsible for facilitating the session). The purpose of

the community focus group sessions was to gather information concerning the communication and participative needs of the community members.

1.3.1.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with the internal municipal staff as well as officials from provincial government. The aim of these interviews was to gather information regarding current application of communication media and structures.

1.3.1.3 Sampling

In terms of the focus groups the participating towns have been selected by requesting representatives of the project Steering Committee to indicate crucial towns, areas or communities. In terms of the interviews municipal and provincial officials in senior positions have been interviewed.

1.3.1.4 Other Methods and Instruments

The measuring instruments used during the research phase included the priority index (P-Index) designed and patented by Schutte (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003). The purpose of the P-Index was to prioritise the community needs, which were collected during the focus group sessions.

1.3.2 Further Data Collection

Other than the WCD Project findings, further literature studies and additional interviews were conducted. This additional information sources provided material for further reflection and in-depth analyses of the observations made.

1.3.3 Data Interpretation and Generic Framework

The information and findings generated by the WCD Project were analysed and interpreted within the context of the proposed link between communication, public participation and sustainable development. After the interpretation of the main findings, a communication framework for municipalities was developed.

1.4 CONTENTS: OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 provides an introduction and background to this thesis. It also states the research problem, the research design and methodology as well as a outline and summary of the chapters contained in this thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In Chapter 2 an overview of the literature employed to establish the theoretical framework on which this thesis is based. An introduction to the key concepts, which includes sustainable development, participation and communication, is provided.

Chapter 3: Research on communication for participation in the West Coast District (WCD).

Chapter 3 describes the background, methodology and main findings of the WCD Project. In this Chapter the main issues and problems concerning communication and participation in local government are pointed out.

Chapter 4: Interpretation of Results

In Chapter 4 an interpretation and analyses of the findings and results of the WCD Project as described in the previous Chapter is provided. A detailed

discussion of communication problems referred to in the previous Chapter is provided.

Chapter 5: Communication Framework for Enhanced Participation

This chapter is aimed providing an implementation framework to guide local government in terms of communication. The communication problems highlighted during the interpretation and analyses of findings, forms the key themes of the framework in this Chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Chapter 6 summarises the main observations made in this thesis. It therefore provides an overview of the conclusions drawn from the main arguments.

CHAPTER 2

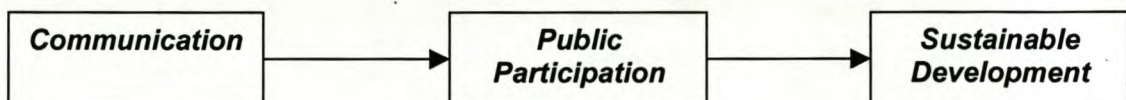
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 comprises a literature review of the relevant constructs of this thesis. The key constructs to be discussed are: **sustainable development**, **public participation** and **communication**. The reason for this selection of constructs derives from the following research question: Can corporate (organizational) communication theory and practice enhance public participation in developmental local government?

Diagram 2 illustrates the link between the three main constructs namely that the application of corporate communication practices and theory could enhance and improve public participation processes in local government. It is accepted as premise to this study that effective participation processes in turn, will positively influence development and its sustainability (Kellerman, 1997:53).

Diagram 2: The link between communication, public participation and sustainable development.



2.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

In Section 52 of the Constitution, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) the importance of participation in the process of sustainable, democratic and developmental local government is emphasised. Section 52 makes provision for municipal encouragement of community involvement in the affairs of local government.

Section 6 (1) & (2) of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) states that the administrative function of local municipalities should facilitate clear relationships and co-operation between itself and the local community.

The municipality is tasked with the responsibility to establish the relationships, and hence it is to be expected that the initiative to embark on public participation should come from the municipality as the facilitators of co-operation and communication. Being the facilitator does not, however, mean that the municipality should be in dominant control of public participation, but that they are merely the facilitator of the process in which various stakeholders should be involved. Co-operation and open communication is only possible when a win-win relationship based on mutual trust and understanding exists between the municipality and the community. In referring to "*clear relationships*", "*co-operation*" and "*communication*" this section envisaged an ongoing and interactive two-way process.

The development of mechanisms to support and ensure participation is also provided for by legislation. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) provides for such mechanisms to promote citizen participation in the formulation of policy and in the evaluation of decision-making and policy implementation.

Municipal councils are also required to develop mechanisms to consult and involve the community and community organizations. Section 16(1) of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) requires municipalities to develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government, by encouraging the community to participate in municipal processes which includes:

- The preparation, implementation and review of the integrated development planning process of the municipality
- The establishment, implementation and review of the municipal performance management system

- The monitoring and review of municipal performance as well as the impact and outcomes of such performance
- The preparation of the budget of the municipality
- The strategic decisions relating to service provision by the municipality.

The Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) also provides for the capacitation of communities through the development of capacity areas, to enable effective participation in the above municipal processes.

Finally, legislation addresses the structures through which participation in municipal affairs should take place. Section 17 of the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) states that participation by the local community should take place through political structures. The Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000) also provides that special needs of people such as disabled individuals, illiterate people, women and other disadvantaged groups.

There are however limitations on the extent of public participation in municipal affairs, meaning that participation must not interfere with the municipal council's sole mandate and political legitimacy to govern. The aim of participation and participatory democracy is to complement legally responsible structures such as ward committees, and may not replace them.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: KEY CONCEPTS

The theoretical framework is aimed at explaining the key concepts of this study.

2.3.1 Sustainable Development

Todaro (1989:620) explains development as the improvement of the quality of human lives by raising the standard of living through the stimulation and promotion of economic growth. Development also involves improving the self-esteem of people by establishing the relevant systems and institutions promoting

human dignity and respect. Increasing of people's freedom to choose and their range of choice is yet another aspect which is addressed by development.

In Kotze (1997:83-88) the concept of development is also discussed but a qualifying factor for development was introduced namely that development must be sustainable. According to Kotze (1997:83-88) sustainable development is a controversial issue and has been the cause for lively debate. Yet, for every development initiative to be meaningful and to have a right to existence, such initiative should promote sustainability in terms of the extent to which development is being promoted. National legislation places an obligation on local government to fulfil specific developmental objectives. It also prescribes mechanisms and processes through which local government can enable the public or communities to assist in fulfilling these legislative developmental objectives, i.e. for communities to participate in development and promoting its sustainability (see 2.2 of this Chapter for references to relevant legislation).

Over time several trends regarding the sustainable development have emerged. This subsection is aimed at exploring some of the different trends and views on the matter, and also to contextualise sustainable development in terms of public participation and local government.

Although the aim of sustainable development as an ethic is to cultivate development that can be maintained over a longer period of time, it also has other nuances to it. It has been described as the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

In earlier times civilisations has regarded the earth as an unlimited resource to fulfil their needs with little or no regard for the fact that the resource might be depleted if the existing attitude continued. People also had little realisation for their own dependency on a specific environment in order to survive. The

Industrial Revolution and the population explosion have contributed to putting existing resources under strain causing anti-movements such as the Green Revolution and other development efforts to arise during the period of the 1960's emphasising economic growth. At a later stage of the debate, environmental considerations started to exercise strong influence on perceptions of development and sustainability. There was also a realization that universal and unmonitored economic growth which forms the core principle of the development paradigm, is detrimental to the environment and restricts future options for present and later generations. This led to other interpretations representing the combination of both the economy and the environment, culture, indigenous knowledge systems and the ecology added to the debate and gave a broader perspective on sustainable development.

The general realisation was that current lifestyles could not be maintained if the limits of the physical, social, economical and ecological environment are not taken into consideration. It is important to distinguish some of the dominant views of sustainable development, especially because it accommodates a diverse range of contexts. The predominant views of sustainable development was categorised by Carley and Christie (1992:77-78) and included technocratic management, the populist, the Marxist, the deep ecological and the co-evolutionary view.

The *technocratic management approach* is viewed as the most prominent approach in the sustainable development debate, and portrays a perspective where people are separated from their environment. This perspective has its roots in the classical modernisation theory, where high levels of economic growth were associated with development. The exploitation of resources is justified with the argument that human needs need to be satisfied. In the process very little attention is paid to the price of high economic growth namely pollution of the natural environment and depletion of natural resources. Most scientists believe that the effective management of resources where the destructive effects to the

environment is minimised, provides an answer to this dilemma. This view leads to the conservation of resources, where it is emphasised that attempts should be made to minimise impact on resources by using renewable resources, even to the level where regions co-operate with each other to make the last mentioned possible.

The *populist view* promotes local self-sufficiency (in the form of grass-root level action) and the application of other knowledge systems for development. Grass-roots level issues, empowerment and local capacity building are very important in the populist view. Points of departure important to this view includes the promotion of economic self-sufficiency, the reduction of dependency on external help, increasing the availability of resources on grass-roots level to enhance prioritising by the local people themselves, rejecting the attainment Western affluence as a development goal.

A concern of this view is that it tends to amputate the importance of the role of the environment in development—a healthy ecosystem is required for development and the entire focus cannot only be on the human factor.

The *Marxist view* follows two main approaches namely the “hard” and the “soft” approach. The hard approach states that the environment is a resource in the process of development and that its outputs should be maximised for the benefit of everybody. The soft approach places social ecology at the centre and claims that people cannot be separated from ecological crises. Ecological issues and social justice should be addressed simultaneously.

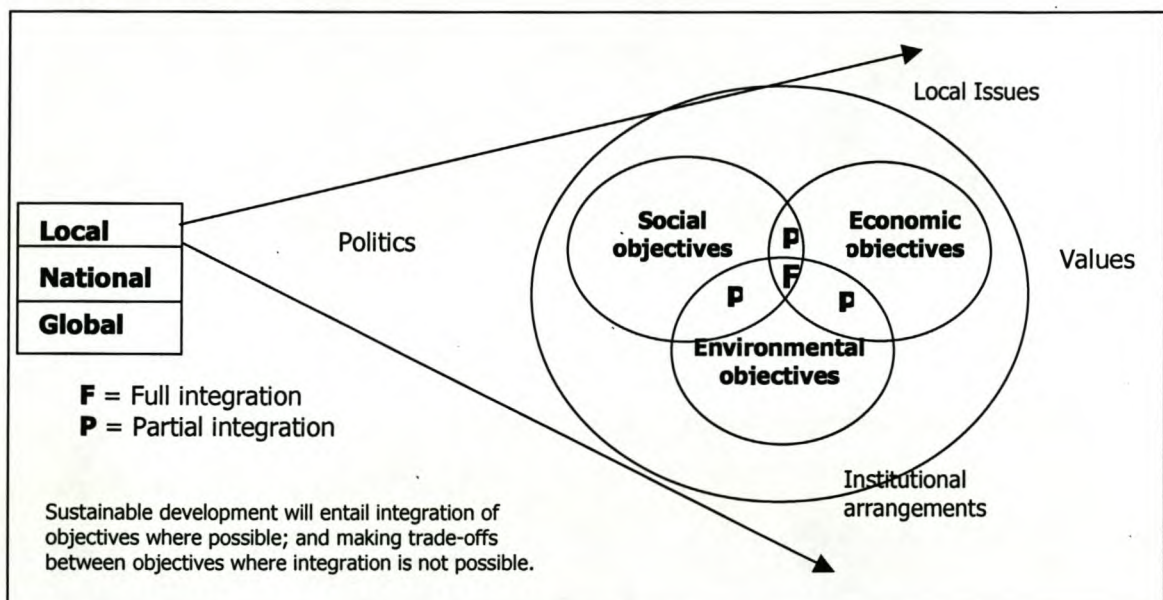
The *deep ecological view* focuses on the environment and combines eastern religions, feminist ideas and rights of other species with existing values. Shiva (1989) a prominent author in the deep ecological view argues that men, women and the environment are not different entities but rather one unit, which is very dependent on the earth. Eco-feministic ideas are concerned with gender inequality and the relationship between the treatment of women and that of

nature. It argues that women have important ecological knowledge to preserve the earth, due to the fact that many women are responsible for doing a great deal of manual labour. Ecological degradation will be reduced if gender inequality is sufficiently addressed.

The *co-evolutionary approach*, according to Norgaard (1994), proclaims that Western approaches to the environment have focussed on the reductionistic perception of the environment and have ignored other knowledge systems also dealing with the environment.

The concept of sustainable development has different focus points and past debate included that development should be sustainable in terms of the environment, the economy and the society. Dalal-Clayton and Bass (2000) support this point and argued that the main objectives of sustainable development namely the social, economic and environmental objectives are integrated either partial or in full. These objectives operate on local government level where politics, values, local issues and institutional arrangements also have an influence.

Diagram 3: Sustainable development in local government (Adapted from Dalal-Clayton and Bass, 2000).



Another key element to be included is the cultural element. The concept of culture is the over arching term describing the original and creative solutions that a group of people has developed to be able to cope with their environment. This includes values and personality, but also techniques, knowledge, organization and aspirations of a group of people in a specific environment. Culture as a resource for sustainable development is the embodiment of information on the structure, maintenance and adaptation of societies to their respective environments or contexts.

According to Kotze (1997:83) the sustainability of a system is strengthened if the system matches its ever-changing environment. Knowledge of the environment and the way people relate to such environment becomes vital for sustainable development. People also need sufficient information to control or manage their environment in order to improve the sustainability of the environment and also of development. It is therefore essential that such sufficient information be conveyed to people through active involvement that is their participation in development. It is furthermore essential that the process of conveying the information be appropriate to ensure that participation leads to sustainable development.

With reference to Diagram 2 of this Chapter, sustainable development is a crucial construct in this thesis because it provides the very reason for developmental interventions such as communication and participation efforts. Sustainable development constitutes the driving force when striving towards truly participative local government, and effective community and corporate communication, in such way providing strategic focus when embarking on these endeavours.

2.3.2 Public Participation

The following section is aimed at providing the reader with an overview consisting of selected theoretical aspects of public participation, the latter being the process that will be supported by communication.

A municipality is compelled to develop “a culture of municipal governance that compliments formal representative government with a system of participatory governance” ([http://www.sn.apc.org/users/clc/localgovt/bulletin/01\(1\)cp.htm](http://www.sn.apc.org/users/clc/localgovt/bulletin/01(1)cp.htm)) with reference to the Municipal Systems Act, 2000:Chap.4). The Constitution 1996 is focussed on encouraging the involvement of communities and community organizations in local government (Act 108 of 1996).

Craythorne (1994:73) defines public participation as a means of reducing autocratic behaviour. Participation should involve ‘the people’ in government and direct governmental efforts at the real needs of society (Craythorne, 1994:73).

Public participation is also defined as the continuous interactive process between role-players that is aimed at improving decision-making during all the phases of development projects and processes (Roomy Van Jaarsveld Consultants, 2001:v). This requires the involvement of all stakeholder groups, including marginalized groups (Roomy Van Jaarsveld Consultants, 2001: iv).

Participation can also be defined as a continuous process through which people are capacitated or enabled to exercise varying degrees of influence over development activities that affect their lives. Participation is an empowering process, enabling people to have an increasing measure of control over their own lives. Therefore, participation ought to be measured in terms of the degree of influence people exercise over development initiatives and activities (Kellerman, 1997:52).

2.3.2.2 Public Participation Theory

As mentioned earlier, legislation imposes upon local government the obligation to promote social and economic development of local communities as well as encouraging and supporting communities to participate in development initiatives and in the decision-making process, which accompanies all development initiatives ([http://www.sn.apc.org/users/clc/localgovt/bulletin/01\(1\)cp.htm](http://www.sn.apc.org/users/clc/localgovt/bulletin/01(1)cp.htm)).

Public participation is therefore also aimed at influencing and improving decision-making, and takes place according to particular decision-making systems. A focus on the different development decision-making systems or models will broaden general understanding of the functioning of public participation in the development environment, where local government takes place. Development theory has established different decision-making systems, which include (Kotze, 1997:39-40):

- (a) Top down decision-making, and
- (b) Bottom-up decision-making.

(a) Top-down decision-making

The *Top-down decision-making approach* is characteristic of a highly centralised system, and a development strategy focussing on planning, financing and professionalism (Kotze, 1997:39-40). In most developing countries expertise and finance necessary for development initiatives is seated in the government (Kotze, 1997:39-40). The community and other stakeholder groups within such a context are mainly receivers of government inputs and services. A blueprint planning approach is adopted for the implementation of top-down decision-making, leaving minimal room for adjustment to changing circumstances or for participation by target groups (Kotze, 1997:39-40). The blue print approach entails a planning process, which pursues economic goal and relies on economic theories (Kotze, 1997:39-40).

Kellerman views participation as a means to secure the sustainability of socio-economic development projects, and must be aimed at establishing ownership and local management of development projects (Kellerman, 1997:51).

Oakley et al (1991:7) distinguish between participation as a means and as an end. Where public participation is deemed as a means to an end, it is seen as a social learning process which is necessary for the success of the initiative, the involvement of communities and the improvement of the project outcome (in terms of cost sharing, increasing efficiency, and improved effectiveness). Where participation is seen as an end in itself, beneficiary involvement confers legitimacy on projects through endorsing a development initiative, striving towards gaining long-term social advantages and sustainable development (Oakley et al, 1991:3).

2.3.2.1 Related Concepts

Over time and through the practical application of public participation in development initiatives, other related terms of public participation have developed. The World Bank has identified three types of participation constituting the layers of participation. It was pointed out that each conceptualisation of the notion of public participation is suitable for its own unique circumstances (DANCED 1998:7). The types of participation can be explained as follow:

- *Passive participation*, which involves the dissemination of information regarding certain courses of action to stakeholders,
- *Consultative participation*, referring to stakeholders being consulted before decision-making, without having to share in the responsibilities associated with decision-making, and
- *Interactive participation*, where stakeholders are involved in collaborative analyses in decision-making. The aim is to find multiple perspectives through the use of learning methodologies.

(b) Bottom-up decision-making

Bottom-up decision-making approach is aimed at promoting local participation through facilitation and co-operation with the local people. Bottom-up decision-making still involves central government to ensure that the decision-making process is well informed, taking into account wider regional and national interests (Kotze, 1997:40-41). A partnership action approach is used to implement bottom-up decision-making. According to the partnership action approach local government and the community, in this way establishing a partnership, take decisions jointly. Partnership action is dependent on the support of the central decision-maker, and the perspective and indigenous knowledge of the local decision-makers (Kotze, 1997:41).

The *participation learning-process approach* is a further development of the bottom-up decision-making and partnership action, in the sense that it makes procedural demands on the development organization itself by requiring that the latter should adopt a learning attitude and simultaneously establish a learning culture in respect of development initiatives. This is done in order for the local community to be included in the process (Kotze, 1997:43). The participation learning action rests on three foundations namely methods, behaviour/ attitudes and sharing (Wetmore & Theron, 1998:48-49):

The learning process is subject to numerous adjustments, which takes place in three stages: learning to be effective, learning to be efficient and learning to expand (Korten, 1983:214). In each of the three stages free-flowing and reliable information which is transferred by way of communication processes, is vital in order for the learning to take place (Kotze, 1997:44).

Adaptive administration is a broad concept embracing all the above-mentioned approaches, and is not distinct from any of them (Kotze, 1997:46). Adaptive administration is highly decentralised and therefore requires intense coordination administered by a particular approach and working method at both the central

(i.e. the local government) and local (i.e. the community) decision-makers (Kotze, 1997:46). Adaptive administration requires adequate administrative capacity, culturally relevant management methods, adaptability and the ability to learn from past mistakes (Kotze, 1997:47).

The four approaches show the evolution of decision-making from bureaucratic top-down decision-making to increased participative top-down decision-making including participative learning and adaptive administration. Participation as a means of empowering people is essential for sustainable development. It enhances the decision-making ability and autonomy of people to direct their own lives and make a decision whether or not development interventions will be sustainable or not. However, people can only make such decisions if they receive or have access to proper information, and in instances where they are able to communicate their own views and needs to the correct institutions.

2.3.2.3 Key Requirements for Public Participation

The following represents a number of key requirements aimed at setting off effective participation in local government, especially during the initial phases of any development initiative (Nel, 2001:614-615). Such key requirements include:

- The local council and the community must be clear about the purpose of the public participation exercise,
- Community members who will be involved, need to be identified in advance,
- The rules and guidelines concerning representation needs to be agreed upon especially where interest groups will be representing a wider constituency, and
- The parties involved must realise that community participation forms part of the initial phases of the development initiative and will take time.

2.3.3 Communication

This section is aimed at providing an analysis of the third important concept in the research hypothesis, namely communication. In the previous chapter it was explained that the goal of this thesis would be to find out how communication practices would be able to assist in the participation process, rendering the latter to be more effective. This implies a practical approach to public participation by applying communication typically found in organizations, to the developmental context. In this way the versatility of the concept communication in terms of its application in other environments, is focussed upon and effort is made to expand its meaning.

This section is therefore aimed at exploring communication in the following ways:

- To clarify its meaning by providing definitions thereof and discussing various approaches to communication,
- To analyse the organizational levels at which communication operates, and
- To find a connection between communication and public participation in the developmental context.

2.3.3.1 Defining the Concept

The concept of communication has acquired many different meanings. Communication has evolved over time shifting in meaning from earlier understandings that it is the response to an external stimulus, to the understanding of the concept as the transmission of information, ideas and skills. Earlier conceptualisation or understanding of communication emphasised the dynamics of human response to external stimuli, while later conceptualisation emphasised a typical process orientation to the concept including the meaning of communication as a process. Currently, the concept of communication is understood as an interactive process between a sending and a receiving person

or institution, where messages are transferred to the other person or institution and also understood (Gibson & Hodgetts, 1991:5).

The following definitions provide possible definitions for communication and express some of the existing views on the matter. Communication can be defined as a two way process whereby **information is transferred** from one person to another by means of a communication channel. In return the receiver of the message reacts by providing feedback to the original communication or message. The person initiating the communication usually does so due to a need to convey specific information in order to receive information in return so that certain activities can be conducted (Schwella et al, 1996:228).

Communication could also mean "... all [of] those processes by which people **influence** one another... this definition is based on the premises that all actions and events have communicative aspects, as soon as they are perceived by a human being [and] that such perception changes the information which an individual possesses and therefore influences him or her." (Ruesch & Bateson, 1951:6).

Ross (1983:8) adds another dimension to the above definitions by stating that communication involves a number of **potential stimuli** which at a later stage becomes a message as individual meaning is attached to it according to information being transferred to the individual (Hunt, 1989:29).

In the light of the above, it is clear that communication carries across information but also incites the need to be talked to and to add value to the conversation by providing inputs and feedback. Communication is also able to change the meaning that people attach to matters (i.e. their individual perceptions) and is therefore instrumental in getting people to participate in matters pertaining to local government.

2.3.3.2 Theoretical Approaches and Models

The principles of communication theory provide a starting point for discussions on the concept of communication. The discussion on communication theory is aimed at the following objectives: (i) explaining the communication process, (ii) identifying the essential parts of the communication process, (iii) explaining the development of communication theory at various points in time. This will be attained through a discussion of different theoretical approaches and models to communication.

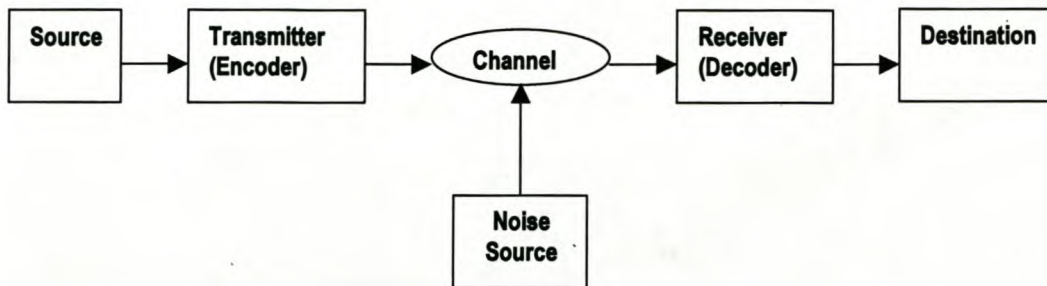
There are various approaches and models aimed at describing the communication process. In this part of the discussion a selection of some of the theoretical approaches will be analysed.

(a) Mechanistic approach

The Shannon and Weaver model is described as one of the earlier attempts to illustrate the communication process (Shannon & Weaver, 1949:21). According to O'Sullivan et al. (1989:43) the writers' effort extended the applicability of information theory beyond its engineering base into human communication.

According to this model a message is created at a source and encoded into a signal, which is transmitted through a channel to a receiver, which in turn decodes the signal and transmits the message to its final destination. The noise is applied as an external variable interfering in the process of transmitting the signal, i.e. influencing the quality of the signal. Diagram 4 illustrates the mechanistic approach to communication as described by Shannon and Weaver (1949:21).

Diagram 4: Mechanistic approach (Shannon & Weaver, 1949:21).

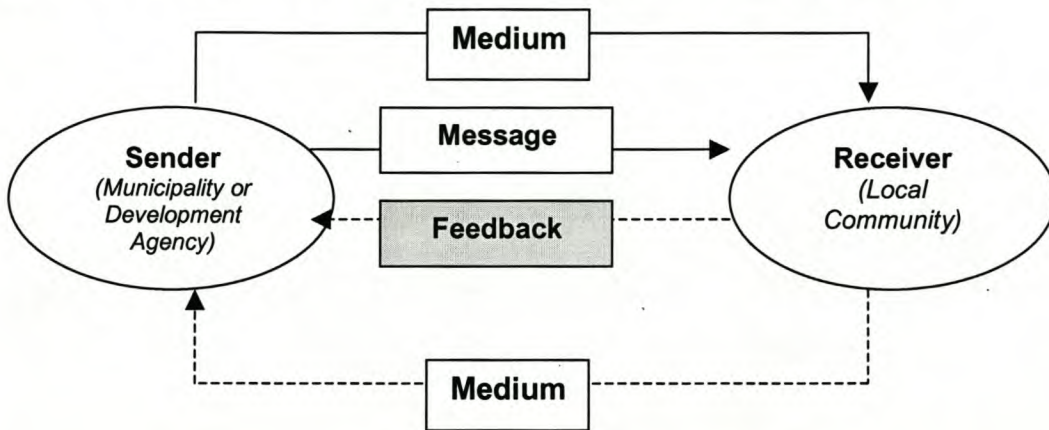


The importance of this model lies in the fact that it illustrates and identifies the essential parts of the communication process. This theory was criticised for rendering the receiver passive, leaving the receiver at the mercy of the previous stages and at the ability (or lack thereof) of the sender to communicate the message (O'Sullivan et al, 1989:43). It is noticeable that according to this model information is transmitted but there is no feedback component to indicate communicative interaction, hence the previously mentioned point of criticism. The reason for this is that this model was originally intended to describe electronic communication and therefore the human aspect was omitted. The next approach will focus on including the human aspect into the communication process.

(b) Humanistic approach

In this model, which was adapted from the model designed by Sanford et al (1976:16), the transmission of information in the form of a message, from the sender to the receiver is illustrated. The information or message is transmitted to the receiver by way of a medium, and feedback concerning the information or message received is sent back to the sender. In this way a communication cycle is created meaning that two-way transmission of information is obtained and the human aspect, which was lacking in the previous model by Shannon and Weaver (1949:21), is included. Diagram 5 serves as illustration of the humanistic approach as adapted from Sanford et al (1976:16).

Diagram 5: Humanistic approach. Adapted from Sanford et al (1976:16).



The importance of this model therefore lies in the fact that it allows for the human aspect or human interaction to be included in the field of communication theory, extending communication theory from electronic to a more humanistic approach. The model also illustrates some of the factors that could potentially influence the transmission of information. According to this model factors influencing information transmit includes the climate or environment, the communication purpose of the sender or the receiver and the communication skills of the sender or the receiver of the information. Other factors influencing communication and information transmission which were discussed by the previously mentioned authors and designers of this model, also include whether or not the message has been transmitted intentionally or unintentionally and if such message can be classified as verbal or non-verbal.

According to Hunt (1989:34-35) the communication model consists of the following components:

- The *sender*, who is the person who transmits the message or information. The message can sent out intentionally or unintentionally.
- The *receiver*, refers to the person to whom the message is communicated or transmitted. Whether the information is in fact received or not, depends on the ability of the receiver to receive messages.

- The *message*, consists of the information transmitted during the course of communication. The message can be sent through verbal or nonverbal channels.
- The *medium* refers to the channel or mode through which communication is transferred from the sender to the receiver.
- The *feedback* or response comes into play where two-way communication exists. Feedback is an indication that the message is received and could be used to evaluate whether or not the message was correctly understood and also keeps communication free flowing.
- The *climate* refers to the orientations (positive or negative) developed due to constant exposure to specific social situations.
- The *purpose* relates to the reason for communication. It is important that the purpose of the sender and the receiver correlates to avoid hindrances in communication transmission.
- *Inter personal skills* refer to the communication skills demonstrated by the sender and the receiver, and also influence the outcome of communicated messages.

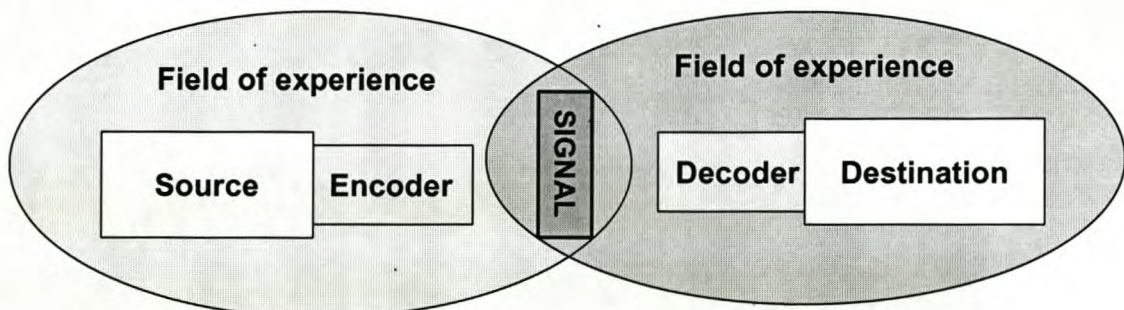
Reece and Brand (1997:32) added an additional component, namely communication filters. Communication passes through filters, which influence the sender and the receiver causing the message to be distorted.

Although the humanistic approach caters for externalities that could possibly influence communication, greater attention should be given to the environment in which communication takes place especially if communication and its related practices should be applied in contexts and disciplines of thought other than that of the corporate environment. The next approach will focus on the aspect of context as it relates to the communication process.

(c) Contextual approach

In this approach attention is paid to the contextualisation of communication processes. Schramm's model of the communication process explains how the source generates the signal or message and the encoder transmits or sends such message. Diagram 6 serves as illustration of Schramm's communication model (Schramm, 1954: 172). According to Schramm's model, effective communication exists in those areas where the frames of reference overlap. The signal is received by a decoder, which decodes the signal into a message before reaching the receiver. Schramm's model of the communication process illustrates how the source generates the signal or message and the encoder transmits or sends such message. The decoder receives the signal and decodes it before it reaches its destination.

Diagram 6: Contextual approach (Schramm, 1954:172).



The importance of Schramm's model lays in the fact that each individual has a frame of reference by which we assign meaning to various messages (Schramm, 1954: 172). This frame of reference is determined by environmental factors, including individual learning experiences, native abilities, and immediate situations that people experience. The frame of reference of each individual differs due to the various composite elements forming such framework.

It is therefore important to bear in mind when drawing up a communication strategy where different people or groups of people will be communicating to each other, that their various frames of reference need to overlap in certain

areas, i.e. those areas which they will be communicating about. It is the duty of the communication strategist to investigate the environment in order to try to find out the elements of the frames of reference concerned, in order to establish areas of overlap. According to Schramm's model, the environment in which the communication process operates, determines to a significant extent how well communicating parties will understand each other and exchange vital information to one another.

The incorporation of context in the communication process is especially important for the local government and development environment because it differs from the corporate environment. The local government context is unique in the sense that the organization and the publics (i.e. stakeholders) differ from those of the corporate environment (Steyn & Puth, 2002:4). Local government includes various governmental and non-governmental organisations, the community as well as unique developmental challenges relating to poverty and economic development.

Three important aspects concerning the process of transmitting information have been highlighted, namely the mechanistic approach, the humanistic approach and the contextual approach. Each of these approaches focussed on a unique aspect relating to communication and the transmission of information including the basic elements of the communication process, human interaction and feedback course of the previously mentioned process, and its context.

An important element, which was not included in any of the approaches that have been discussed up to, now is dealing with the complexities of larger groups of individuals or even audiences. This causes for a situation to arise where there is more than one receiver and sender, and the messages and feedback created need to reach different target individuals and audiences.

The next approach emphasises another aspect or dimension essential to the local government environment, namely the group dimension of the communication process.

(d) Group approach

In the above-mentioned approaches to communication the transmission of information is linear, illustrating communication occurring between two sets of parties. In many situations communication is not always restricted to two parties and may even take place between a numerous sets of parties or individuals.

Swanepoel and De Beer (1996:1) described a more complex model which is circular and three-dimensional to include more than two parties or individuals. The latter model referred to as the structural model explains communication on various levels usually following a circular course.

The structural model holds that more than two individuals can communicate at the same time, either by way of words or another way of communication like non-verbal communication. The more people participating in the process, the more complex it becomes especially when the scenario occurs where one person addresses a large audience, or when people communicate indirectly to others through communicating with specific target individuals to get a message to a number of other people.

The structural model also facilitates communication on various levels, especially by means of indirect communication as discussed in the previous paragraph. The model makes provision for communication among individuals on one level, but can also be extended to another level of individuals through indirect communication. This model is also useful in the local government environment because it facilitates communication and interaction among different individuals (i.e. the community and officials) and also among different groups of individuals

(i.e. role players) on various levels of government (i.e. local, provincial and national government).

The four communication models discussed up to this point addressed the following dimensions: (i) the basic components of communication, (ii) the humanistic aspect and two-way communication, (iii) the context of communication, and (iv) the group dimension of communication. These theoretical approaches explained the communication process and provided different views on the process. It is imperative to understand the process involved in communication because at a later stage the internal components of the process will be analysed and applied to construct a framework aimed at facilitating meaningful participation.

2.3.3.3 Operation of Communication

The following part of the discussion is aimed at explaining the operational working of the process of communication. Whereas the previous subsection dealt with the theoretical aspects of communication, this subsection includes a discussion on how communication actually takes place at the various organizational levels.

There are various layers of communication in an organization. These layers of communication determines the levels at which the communication process operates in the organization. The communication levels vary from micro- to macro levels of communication, with an intermediary level operating between the micro and the macro levels. Micro level, which comprises the most basic level, includes communication on an individual basis. The intermediary level consists of group and inter-group interaction, while macro level communication entails interaction on an organization-wide basis.

(a) *Micro level*

Micro level communication serves as a basic level of communication. It includes inter- and intra-personal communication. Other aspects of micro level communication that will be discussed include listening, non-verbal communication and intercultural communication.

Interpersonal interaction includes aspects such as intra-personal communication, listening skills, non-verbal communication, and intercultural communication. According to Fielding (1993:95) interpersonal communication is focussed on direct “person to person” communication, meaning the interaction between two individuals without the use of a mediating additional individual.

Fielding (1993:97) holds the opinion that effective interpersonal communication is dependent on a positive self-image and good intra-personal interaction, the latter meaning the way in which a person interacts with her- or himself. Good interpersonal communication therefore starts with the way in which a person relates to her- or himself. Intra-personal communication is based upon the selection of experiences of an individual. Personal selection of experiences forms the basis of individual perception of the environment, which ultimately forms the value system of each individual. This observation links with an earlier discussion on Shramm’s contextual model of communication (Hunt, 1989) which stated that individual frame of reference, shaped by the external environment, influences the way in which messages are received and interpreted by people.

Another aspect of interpersonal communication is the ability to listen. According to Gibson and Hodgetts (1991:60), listening can take place in two types of sub-environments namely the psychological and the physical environment. The psychological or mental environment refers to the above discussion on intra-personal communication and individual perception - that which is internal to the audience and the speaker. Past experiences of people, their value systems, levels of education and the psychological make-up are four mental variables

considered to be significant influences in the course of the listening process. The physical surroundings of listening incorporate that which exist around people who are listening, and their environment. Some of the basic elements to the physical environment of listening are physical speech and hearing abilities, age, place, timing and noise interferences.

Fisher (1981:330-331) proposes that active listening involves four underlying values: empathy, acceptance, congruence and concreteness. *Empathy* refers to the quality of listening from the speaker's point of view, as apposed to the listener's own point of view. *Acceptance* is seen as the quality of respect for another's individuality, self worth and welfare. *Congruence* refers to openness and genuineness on the part of the listener. *Concreteness* is the quality of focussing on specifics and avoiding vagueness. These four values are developed and applied by active listeners to the benefit of the entire organization.

Interpersonal communication also addresses nonverbal interaction, namely the transmission and the receiving of "messages without words". The ability to understand and "read" these nonverbal signals and how these signals operate during interaction is important for effective communication (Fielding, 1993:113).

Some of the major components of nonverbal interaction can be identified as *kinesics*, *proximics*, and *paralanguage*. *Kinesics* refer to body language incorporating facial expressions, gestures, and posture. *Proximics* refer to use of space and its relationship to the communication process, while *paralanguage* is the standard term used to describe the manner in which things are being said (Gibson & Hodgetts, 1991:119).

Other nonverbal components include silence, the working environment, individual perception of time and accessories such as jewellery and scarves (Fielding, 1993:114).

Interpersonal interaction also incorporates intercultural communication. The concept of culture refers to systems of beliefs, assumptions and values that are shared by people and which provide rules that govern people and keep them together. People with common values and shared views often use shared verbal or non-verbal codes such as language. The term organizational culture, on the other hand, is applied in organizations and refers to the sharing of a set of ideas, values and attitudes that developed over a period of time and that also takes time to be understood by employees of the organization.

Intercultural communication occurs when people of different cultures start working in an organization where the present culture is not flexible enough to accommodate and accept intercultural interaction. Intercultural communication is a type of interaction that occurs when people from different cultures (and therefore having diverse perceptions of the world) are placed in the same environment (Fielding, 1993:445). Intercultural interaction requires people to give up strongly held views and attitudes in order to understand and convey messages to each other.

The interpretation of verbal and non-verbal codes also becomes problematic because various cultures may attach different meanings to them, which implies that during intercultural interaction the negotiation of meaning becomes crucial. In order to address the challenges of intercultural communication the organizational climate needs to be altered. The climate describes the atmosphere in an organization, meaning the ways in which employees deal with one another whether formally or informally.

(b) Intermediary level

The intermediary level of communication exists in a group and between various groups. Although interpersonal communication is predominantly employed by organizations, a great deal of organizational communication occurs on a group

and inter-group basis. The communication or interaction of people within groups is referred to as group dynamics.

A group is defined as a unit of two or more people who interact and associate with each other. Other characteristics of a group is that the composite members are dependent one each other, and also need to find satisfaction from their mutual association with each other, by reaching set goals.

Gibson and Hodgetts (1991:144) distinguish two main types of groups, namely formal and informal groups. Formal groups are determined by the organization. It includes functional groups, project groups and committees. *Functional* groups refer to those grouping of people performing similar tasks and have similar job descriptions. Functional groups have a more permanent nature and is easily identifiable in the organizational structure. *Project* groups consist of people from various functional areas to attain specific project goals. The project group only exist for the duration of the project, and their nature is therefore temporary. *Committees* are advisory groups, and are established to analyse and evaluate particular areas of organizational operations. Committees may be temporary or permanent, in which case they are referred to as standing committees.

Individuals or employees themselves create informal groups. The existence of such groups is based upon individual or collective self-interest. Examples of informal groupings within the organization are groups of people doing the same type of hobby, or circles of friends (Gibson and Hodgetts, 1991:144).

Gibson and Hodgetts (1991:147-148) proposed three types of reasons why people establish groups to belong to, which include propinquity, productivity, and personal satisfaction. *Propinquity* refers to the frequency of contact with certain individuals, which facilitates the establishment of a group. Propinquity can be the reason for the existence of both formal and informal groups. *Productivity* may also constitute a reason for people to form a group. The desire of people to get

the job at hand done, i.e. to achieve productivity, may lead to forming a group. *Personal satisfaction* or motivation is where people form groups with similar goals normally relating to the attainment of common goals, may also be a reason for establishing a group.

Group dynamics as defined earlier, is illustrated by group decision-making. Group decision-making or the attainment of consensus by the group ensures and sustains processes such as participative decision making, the sharing of knowledge and information, as well as problem solving within the group and also within the broader organization (Gibson & Hodgetts, 1991:152-153).

Group participation implies that employees are involved in the planning process and the analysis of problems, in that way increasing their commitment to the decision. *Knowledge sharing* in the group ensures greater quality outputs in terms of decision-making, and rests on the principle that two heads is better than one because ideas are shared and shortfalls are corrected. *Problem solving* in a group also enhances the quality outputs of decision-making because different approaches to problem solving prevent employees from falling into a rut regarding to their way of thinking (Gibson & Hodgetts, 1991:152-153).

However, group dynamics can also have adverse effects. One such adversarial consequence is a phenomenon prevalent in groups of employees and described by Gibson and Hodgetts as “groupthink” (1991:154). The phenomenon of “groupthink” refers to the inclination of individual members in a group to suppress their own dissatisfaction with group decisions and activities and going along with things in the pursuit of unanimity.

(c) Macro level

Macro level communication includes human interaction that takes place on an organizational wide basis. Organization wide communication includes aspects

such as (i) communication channels and flows, as well as (ii) communication networks.

(i) Channels and flows of communication

The communication channels facilitates the flow of communication and differs from communicative group structures in the sense that communication structures determines the accessibility that group members have to transfer information to each other (Fox et al, 1991:156), while communication channels serve as media through which messages can be communicated to target audiences.

Reece and Brand (1997: 46) explain that channels or modes of communication refer to the available media whereby communication may take place within an organization. In order to facilitate effective communication it is imperative to know the appropriate channels facilitating the flow of communication. Such channels may include formal and informal channels or media.

Formal communication channels can be classified into vertical and horizontal channels (Reece & Brand, 1997: 46). The need for channels occurs when an organization acquires more layers, and communication processes need to flow through these various levels. An increase in organizational layers creates a complex organizational structure that renders the transmission of information and provision of feedback to be difficult. In an organization vertical channels carry messages up and downward between the top or executive levels and lower operational levels of the organization.

Upward communication primarily serves as a feedback mechanism carrying messages from sub-ordinates to their leaders and therefore facilitating an upward flow communication (Van Staden et al, 2002:22). Communication from subordinate employees is aimed at improving personal and organizational effectiveness providing employees with the opportunity to give feedback on managerial decision-making and the outcomes and outputs of organizational

initiatives. Opportunities for feedback also enhance employee participation and establish support for managerial actions.

Downward communication, constituting the opposite of upward communication, is applied by managers and leaders to convey information and to give directions to subordinate employees (Van Staden et al, 2002:22). Top management must prevent communication from becoming one-way (i.e. only from the top levels downwards to the lower levels) by making provision for feedback opportunities, as discussed earlier under downward communication.

Lastly, horizontal channels facilitate communication between departments, divisions, managers or employees on the same organizational level. Horizontal or lateral communication involves communication between organizational members as they engage in problem solving, information sharing, and coordination of workflow. During lateral communication, employees can make use of direct interpersonal communication or rely on the organizational hierarchy to transfer information (Van Staden et al, 2002, 22).

An informal communication channel, according to Reece and Brand (1997: 46-47) include the rumour and gossip of the organization's grapevine and is often viewed as a quick way of passing information. The grape vine describes the informal communication system in an organization, and occurs outside the formal communication channels. The accuracy of information spread by means of the grapevine is also a matter of concern. Informal communication may be transmitted along vertical and horizontal levels.

(ii) Networks of communication

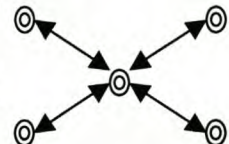
The structure whereby communication within a group of individuals takes place is referred to as communication networks. Communication networks are constructed of groups of individuals organised in hierarchies of authority, having various degrees of access to communicate with one another. The communication

channels facilitate the flow of communication but group structure determines the accessibility with which group members can transfer information (Fox et al:156).

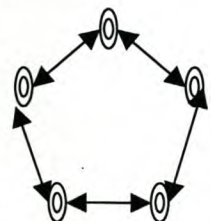
The chain network is structured hierarchically, and facilitates upward and downward communication flow (Fox et al,1991:156). This type of network is typical of direct line authority relations. Mersham & Skinner (2001:49) argue that in this type of structure members at the ends communicate with one person only, while the person occupying the middle position gains access to all of the other members indicating leadership or some key position.



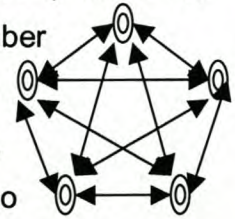
The wheel network illustrates a supervisor in the centre, with subordinates reporting to the centre or supervisor (Fox et al, 1991:156). This network facilitates communication by channelling it through the supervisor, allowing practically no interaction among the various subordinates. This network enables rapid performance of tasks, discouraging two-way communication between the supervisor and the subordinate. It is evident that in this type of network, a clear leadership position exists (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:49). The leadership is vested in the centre and is the only member in the transacting or interacting with the other members in the network causing such member to often suffer of information overload (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:49).



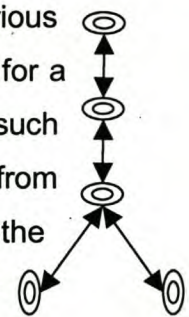
In the circle network lateral communication takes place and each member communicate with the two members on either sides (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:49). This limits communication to the extent that the other members are not included in circular lateral communication (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:49). The circle network is characterised by low centralisation and a high level of independence by members (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:49).



The all-channel network works almost similar than the circle network, but allows members to freely communicate with all of the other members (Fox et al, 1991:156). The all-channel network allows for the greatest member participation, but also makes communication and information management more complicated (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:49). This network structure is typical of a committee where there is no leadership role and all members are equal (Fox et al, 1991:156).



The *y-network* illustrates subordinate members reporting to various supervising and managing members. This network makes provision for a some sort of leadership position (second from the bottom) and such leading person can send out information and also receive messages from the person below and the person immediately above. The person at the bottom and those at the two ends of the y-shape, is restricted to communicating with only one person (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:49).



There is no single network which is “best” for all group communication and the network utilised should represent the objectives of the group for communication, whether it may be establishing a direct line of authority relations, rapid task performance, independence of group members, group participation or centralisation of authority within the group. Schwella et al (1996:228-229) propose the following reasons necessitating communication:

- Exchanging information with external environment and maintaining internal relationships. It is therefore necessary to establish interconnected communication channels, sending and receiving both internal and external communication.
- Creating and maintaining an appropriate organizational climate culture through the effective use of communication.
- Using personnel resources and personal management skills to motivate and encourage employees by utilising the grape vine as one a possible communication channels, and applying personal management skills.

- Transforming the traditional organizational culture will most likely result into revised communication and the management thereof.

2.4 APPLICATION OF COMMUNICATION

Communication, due to its application in various fields of studies has also acquired different and specialised meanings.

2.4.1 Communication in the Corporate Context

Corporate communication (sometimes referred to as organizational communication) refers to communication on behalf of an organization, and includes communication management, i.e. the overall planning, execution, and evaluation of organizational communication with its internal and external stakeholder groups (Grunig (1992) as cited in Steyn & Puth, 2002:6). According to Steyn and Puth (2002:5). The aim of corporate communication is to increase organizational effectiveness, and to create and maintain relationships with stakeholders.

Over time a specific need for communication in the developmental school of thought was identified. This need was conceived through a growing awareness of the instance that sustainable development and processes such as public participation which supports sustainable development, require communication applications to assist, promote and sustain development initiatives in local government.

2.4.2 Communication in the Developmental Context

In order to promote sustainable development communication processes supporting and facilitating public participation needs to be instituted (Kellerman,1997:53). The success and meaningfulness of a public participation approach largely depends on the community being adequately informed and

sufficiently being able to transmit their views, interests and concerns to all bodies and institutions involved in the development project (Kellerman, 1997:53).

Communication processes should be in place from the very start of a project, from the phase where the project is identified until it reaches the implementation phase¹. The functions of communication processes within the developmental context are to ensure the following:

- Efficient community mobilisation
- Inclusive community decision making
- Community access to a free flow of information
- Informed planning and decision making processes

In the light of the above there is clearly a need and a place for communication in the public participation process and also within the context of development. Swanepoel and De Beer (1996:ix) noted that *“all development efforts will come to nothing if communication breaks down”*. Steyn and Nunes (2001:30) have investigated the phenomenon and introduced the concept of development communication.

2.4.3 Development Communication

Steyn and Nunes (2001:30) stated that development communication is designed to support a particular development programme and to advance development in general. The function of development communication is to inform and motivate government employees at both national- and local government levels. (Rensburg (undated) as cited in Steyn & Nunes, 2001:30).

According to the above definition development communication refers to the communication that takes place in the developmental environment, specifically

¹ The project cycle whereby potentially fundable projects could be steered consists of the following phases: identification; preparation; appraisal; negotiation; implementation; monitoring and evaluation. (Kellerman, 1997:54)

during the planning and implementation phases of development initiatives (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1996:ix). It is focussed at community leaders and individuals in government, non-government, as well as community based organizations and is aimed at improving the outputs and outcomes of development initiatives.

In the opinion of Swanepoel and De Beer (1996:ix) the function of development communication is to support interactive co-operation on an internal and external level. Internally, the project committee need to interact with the fieldworker(s) and the committee constituents. Externally, the project committee interacts with government departments, non-governmental organizations and donors.

2.4.3.1 Theoretical Framework

Development communication has its beginning in various other theoretical approaches, models and trends identified from which the development theories and communication theories are the predominant theories. The various approaches to development communication can be divided into the following classifications namely information dissemination; innovation dissemination; grass roots awareness-raising; development support communication; and participatory communication (Barker, 2001:5-6).

Information dissemination models are aimed at distributing information to improve people's understanding of the benefits or gains of proposed development initiatives. The mass media is used as a vehicle to persuade people and to distribute information.

Innovation dissemination models are aimed at spreading information in order to stimulate potential change in a community. It makes use of vertical top-down approaches as communication vehicles. The basic elements of the distributed information include the target group, the innovation, the sources and the

communication channels. An important consideration would be the institutional and societal capacity and preparedness to adopt and maintain innovations.

Grassroots awareness-raising models place emphasis on the importance of access by grass root level people to the communication process. The aim of access to communication for all people is to promote social justice and democracy. Access may include access to small media at the local level or the promotion of cultural expression and the search for ways of taking control of the mass media.

Development support communication (DSC) models focus on the equal promotion of dialogue and the sharing of messages to achieve participation and interdisciplinary interaction. In this model the DSC agent has a specific role, namely to support and help the change agent to formulate effective development projects and programmes, and also to create an effective communication atmosphere. The DSC models function through translating technical jargon from change agents into messages that are understandable and relevant to the recipients.

Participatory communication (PC) models originated from earlier developmental approaches when critics questioned top-down models and later introduced bottom-up models. These bottom-up models are based on the definition of development as an inclusive process and that societies are responsible for development processes. Key concepts here are community development² and grassroots participation. The term participatory communication emanated from the bottom-up models, and emphasises two-way communication through participation. The top-down models proclaimed one-way communication by only providing for vertical communication from the top down to the community. Participatory communication models transfer vital information and influences

² Community development refers to the collective activity where people sharing mutual interests and concerns become aware of their needs and resources and in response to this co-operate with one another to improve and enhance their position. (Swanepoel, 1996).

people's behaviour and decision-making. Participatory communication models also allows for horizontal communication among people - people have to communicate with each other before they can participate and communicate information as a group to government. Vehicles for participatory communication are developmental processes and strategies for public participation. The use of media must always be two-way to enable the community as the receiver of communication, to provide feedback to government as the sender of information.

2.4.3.2 Methods and Media

Due to its very nature development communication requires specific methods and media to ensure effective communication in target communities. To enable effective communication with communities, the following media can be employed namely community printed, interactive or participatory and community online media.

(a) Community printed media

Printed media for members of the community include local newspapers; notices and information packs. This is the most common media used to communicate with local communities. Printed media is focussed at communicating with literate members of community (Barker, 2001:11).

(b) Interactive and/ or participatory media

Interactive or participatory media include industrial and street theatre, film and video material, commuter channels and community radio (Barker, 2001:9-11).

Industrial and Street Theatre combines the elements of drama and storytelling with organizational message. A possible advantage of theatre is that it has a captive audience and messages can be tailor made for the specific audience. The use of multilingual and interactive dialogue during theatre performances make it very useful in communicating key messages.

Commuter channels refer to the dialogue, debate, playing of music, dance and exhibitions taking place at places where urban and rural commuters make use of public transport such as taxi ranks, bus depots and train stations. Conveying information by word of mouth (through conversations) proved to be not popular with the West Coast community, hence survey results. Commuter channels could rather be employed as a place to disperse information in an innovative way, be it through singing, dancing, drama, talks.

Film and video material can be applied to reflect current issues and aspirations of community members. Communities can take an active part in the production of such video material. The greatest advantage of video is that it overcomes the barriers of illiteracy by visually illustrating concepts and phenomena.

Community radio refers to non-profit participatory radio, broadcasting to a specific local community. The advantage thereof is that it caters for the specific needs of a community and also communicates interactively with such community. Audio media such as the radio also provides an alternative when communicating with communities with low literacy levels. Radio media will also be able to reach communities in remote areas.

(c) Community online media

Cellular telephones are one form of community online media. According to Mersham et al (1995) as cited in Barker (2001:12) a significant percentage of people have a cellular telephone or have access to cellular services. The reason for this tendency can be ascribed to the commitment of network operators to provide a wide coverage area.

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In the light of the above discussion it is clear that communication theory as it is applied in the organizational context, also has a place in the developmental context. Developmental communication supports development initiatives, and has the same function as organizational communication supporting the effectiveness and operation of an organization.

Therefore, the researcher gave a general outline of (a) sustainable development which constitutes the purpose of public participation and communication, (b) a selection of the basic principles of communication theory, that will be applied later in the study when designing the communication strategy, (c) public participation theory which constitutes the process supported by communication, and (d) the linking of communication, public participation and development in order to qualify the need for yet another application of communication theory, and to establish the basis for a pragmatic approach to public participation processes. The next chapter will present a discussion of the design and the methodology to be applied in the research section of this study.

CHAPTER 3

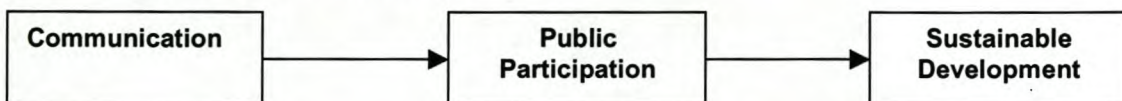
RESEARCH ON COMMUNICATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE WEST COAST DISTRICT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The following chapter will be focussing on (a) a description of the context of the case study, which forms an important source of information towards the operational analysis of this thesis, and (b) the methodology and main findings of that case study. An interpretation and analysis of the West Coast District (WCD) Project findings will be done in the following chapter.

As mentioned previously, this thesis reports on research relating to the application of corporate communication practices and theory in order to enhance and improve public participation processes in local government. It is accepted as premise to this study that effective participation processes in turn, will positively influence development and its sustainability (Kellerman,1997:53). The diagram below illustrates the trail of thought in this study. It proposes the existence of a link between communication, public participation and sustainable development.

Diagram 2: The link between communication, public participation and sustainable development. Also refer to Chapter 2.

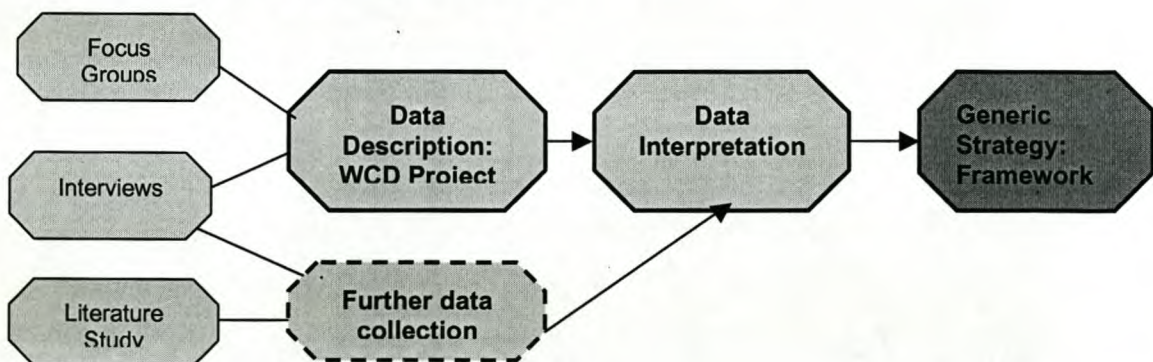


At this point it is also necessary to clarify the position of the researcher in relation to the West Coast District (WCD) Project case study that is used as first source of information in the operational analysis of this study. The WCD Project was initiated by CREA (Creative Associates South Africa), the West Coast District Municipality, and the USAID (United States Agency for International

Development) with a view to formulate a communication and participation strategy (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*). The researcher was part of the project team. As a member of the team the researcher had access to information, material and facilities employed during the course of the project. Prior to this thesis, the researcher obtained permission from the relevant authorities to utilise the WCD project research results together with further information collected by means of additional interviews in the West Coast District and other municipalities as well as other literature sources for the purposes of this study. The WCD Project results are therefore secondary data about communication and participation as it pertains to a specific municipality and its community.

This thesis therefore aims to interpret the case study data together with further information and relate it to the communication theory and the model designed by Sanford et al (1976:16), which is based on the Humanistic Approach (see Chapter 2). The end result will be a proposed communication framework for a local government in structuring their participative processes. During the WCD project two qualitative data collection methods were applied namely focus groups and semi-structured interviews as described by Welman and Kruger (2001:187). After a description of the WCD Project context, the methods employed and the main findings, further interpretation of the main findings of the WCD Project will be conducted by means of additional analysis. Diagram1 below (also see Chapter 1) serves as an illustration of the structure and logic of this chapter as well as Chapter 4.

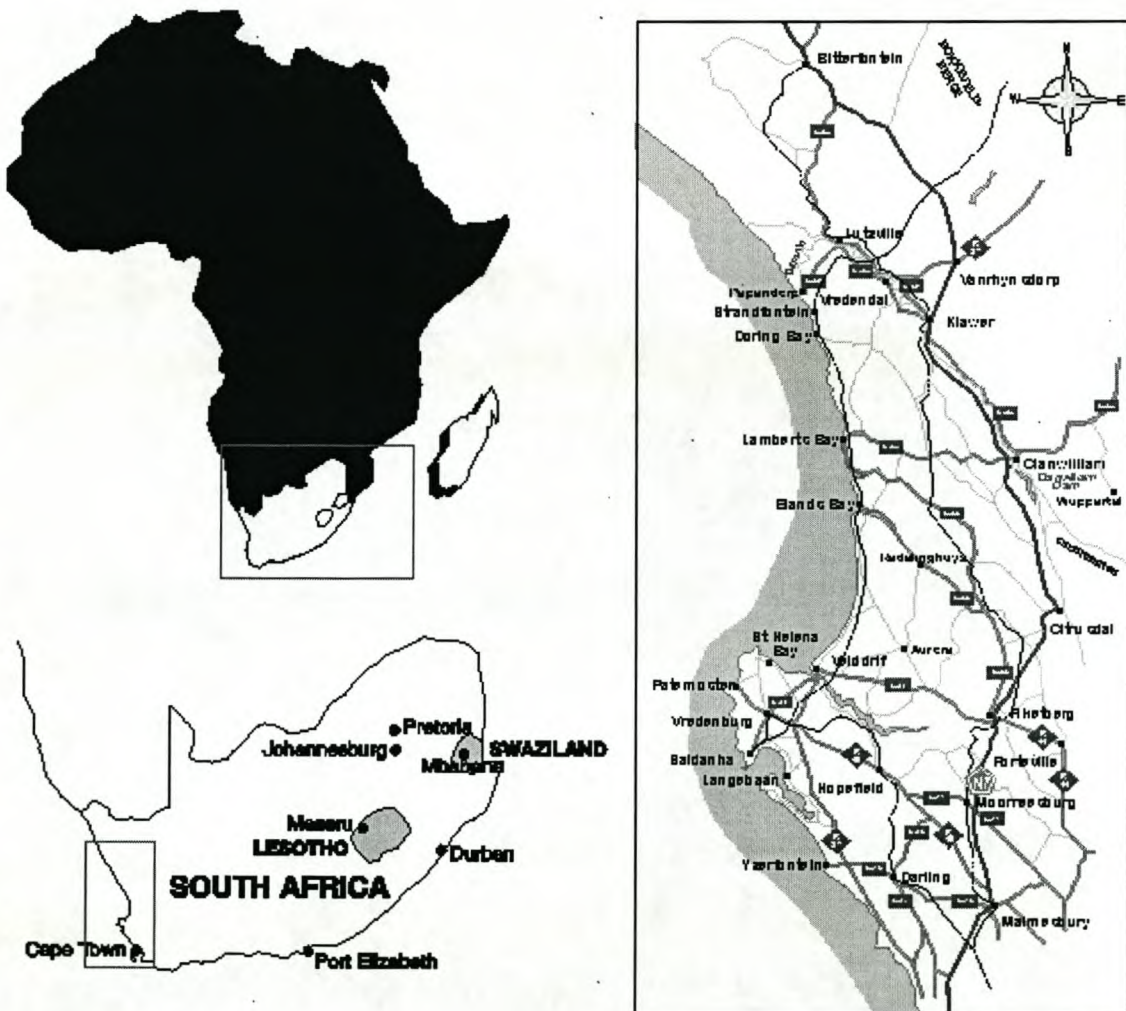
Diagram 1: Structure of Chapter 3 and 4.



3.2 BACKGROUND TO THE WCD PROJECT

The West Coast Region is located along the South-West Coast of South Africa within the Western Cape Province (<http://www.capewestcoast.org/RegionalInfo/PopulationMain.htm>). It extends from Blaauwberg in the Cape Metropolitan Area in the south, to the provincial border in Namaqualand in the north. The West Coast Region borders on the Winelands District in the south, the Breede River District in the east, and the Northern Cape Province in the north and east. On the west, the region borders on the Atlantic Ocean.

The geographical location of the West Coast District (Source: <http://www.capewestcoast.org/RegionalInfo/PopulationMain.htm>).



The WCD Project entailed a case study of the West Coast District Municipality (WCDM). The project sponsors implemented a district-wide project aimed at the strengthening of relationships between the various spheres of government (i.e. district and local government) and communities. In strengthening these relationships the aim was to place specific emphasis on enabling municipalities to effectively convey their performance to the general public, and enabling municipalities to determine the unique context of participation and communication (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

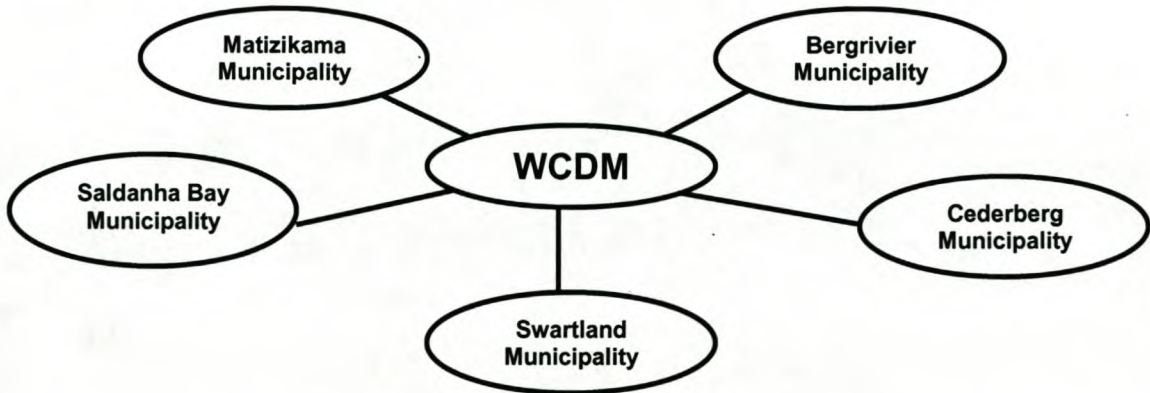
Specific intended outcomes of the project included the design of a public participation and communication strategy and policy, as well as the development of a learning product, which included a comprehensive documentation of the project and the lessons learnt from the experience.

The WCD project focussed on various units including the community, the District Municipality and the five Local Municipalities falling within the ambits of the West Coast region.

3.2.1 The WCDM and Local Municipalities

The office of the West Coast District Municipality (WCDM) is situated in the town of Moorreesburg in the Western Cape Province and is responsible for a geographical area of approximately 31 000 km². The West Coast district incorporates five category B-Municipalities, namely Bergrivier, Matzikama, Cederberg, Saldanha Bay, and Swartland. The District Management Areas of the West Coast District Municipality amounts to Bitterfontein, Nuwerus, Kliprand, Rietpoort, Molsvlei, Stofkraal, Cederberg Wilderness Area and the West Coast National Park. The diagram below illustrates the WCDM and the five category B-municipalities in the West Coast area.

Diagram 7: The WCDM and the five B-Municipalities in the district (adapted from the West Coast Integrated Development Plan – 2002).



The District Municipality has a total of 470 permanent staff members, with an additional 1 971 permanent staff members being employed by the five local B-municipalities. The number of councillors for both the WCDM and the five local municipalities amounts to 100 members (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, West Coast District: Communication and Public Participation Strategy Framework, 2003*).

The WCDM consists of seven (7) departments or directorates, including the office of the municipal manager (*West Coast Integrated Development Plan – 2002*). Diagram 8 illustrates the organizational structure of the WCDM and indicates the various directorates, which include Finance, Corporate Services, Roads, Health, Engineer Works and Community Services.

Diagram 8: Organizational structure of the WCDM (West Coast Integrated Development Plan – 2002).



The strategic vision of the District is to “provide a better quality of life for all”. The mission statement of the organization proclaims the effective development of the District and all its inhabitants through joint participation. The five priority areas of the IDP, 2002 (*West Coast Integrated Development Plan – 2002*) are to:

- Improve the quality of life of all inhabitants in the West Coast District.
- Improve security and safety within the region.
- Promote and stimulate economic growth in the District.
- Conserve and protect the natural environment and to protect the natural resources.
- Facilitate proactive participation of all developmental role-players.

3.2.2 The WCD Community

The West Coast District had 233 632 residents in 1996. This comprised 6% of the Provincial population and 0,6% of the National population. The largest concentration of people in the region occurs in the Swartland and Saldanha Bay Local Municipal areas. The size of the population as well as the distribution thereof should determine the scope of the communication strategy ([http://www.capewestcoast.org/ RegionallInfo/ PopulationMain.htm](http://www.capewestcoast.org/RegionallInfo/PopulationMain.htm)).


Another important factor to be considered when designing a communication strategy is the ethnic diversity and cultures of the various population groups. In the West Coast coloured people represent the largest part of the population (approximately 76%); Whites represent 21% of the population, and blacks and indians represent the remaining percentage of the total population in the region. Language is also an indicator with regards to the cultural disposition of the inhabitants of a region. According to statistics Afrikaans is the dominant language in the region, with a small percentage of the inhabitants whose first languages are English and Xhosa. The vast majority of Afrikaans speaking people are unilingual ([www.capewestcoast.org/RegionallInfo/ PopulationMain.htm](http://www.capewestcoast.org/RegionallInfo/PopulationMain.htm)).

Levels of training are an important indication of the quality of life of the population and the ability to find employment opportunities to create prosperity (<http://www.capewestcoast.org/RegionalInfo/PopulationMain.htm>). When strategising for communication levels of training discloses the “pitch” at which communication must take place, and the methods and media to be employed during communication. In comparison with the Western Cape, the WCD labour force has lower qualifications and levels of training. Approximately 15% of the population in the region have received no training by 1996, with only 16% of the population having a matric qualification, or a diploma, certificate or degree (<http://www.capewestcoast.org/RegionalInfo/PopulationMain.htm>).

Literacy levels within the region based on 1996 census statistics and surveys conducted in the region are calculated at 28%. Approximately 22% of the black population and 18% of the coloured population have received no formal training according to the 1996 census results (<http://www.capewestcoast.org/RegionalInfo/PopulationMain.htm>).

3.3 WCD PROJECT METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

3.3.1 Methodology



Data
Description:
WCD Project

During the West Coast District Project (2003) research on communication and participation expectations, perceptions, needs and media was conducted. During the research qualitative data collection techniques were employed. Such data collection techniques included focus groups and semi-structured interviews with the local communities and municipal officials. The focus group technique was applied where selected members of communities were consulted. The interview technique was employed during contact with officials at local and provincial levels (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

3.3.1.1 Focus Groups

In order to design a strategy the correct type of information regarding the attitudes, behaviour and relevant issues and needs of the target population had to be gathered. The focus group technique was employed to gather the necessary data. A focus group session entails that the researcher conducts an unstructured, semi-structured, or structured interview with sample groups of individuals. The more structured the interview, the more the researcher should stick to a set of prepared questions. In the case of unstructured interviews, the researcher is focussed on identifying important variables, formulate penetrating questions on the hypotheses to generate more information and further hypothesis (Welman & Kruger, 2001:161)

In the WCD Project (2003), semi-structured interviews were conducted. Focus group sessions have taken place in various towns and communities. A focus group consisted of inhabitants of the town or community, as well as a research co-ordinator and a research assistant. The purpose of the community focus group sessions was to gather relevant information concerning the communication and participative needs of the community members. The focus groups therefore confirmed information pertaining to the receiver of messages or information in the communication model designed by Sanford et al (1976:16) based on the humanistic approach (refer to Chapter 2).

3.3.1.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the internal staff of the various municipalities. The interviews took place separately from the focus group sessions. The aim of the individual semi-structured interviews was to obtain information regarding the available communication mediums, structures utilised by municipal and provincial government officials. The individual interviews were also focussed on gathering information on the messages or information

emanating from the officials at both levels, and also the communication routes or paths of such messages. (These routes are referred to as communication flows. See communication channels and flows in Chapter 2). The individual interviews with the government officials therefore established particulars regarding the sender of information in the communication process as illustrated by the communication model designed by Sanford et al (1976:16) based on the Humanistic Approach (refer to Chapter 2).

3.3.1.3 Sampling of Populations

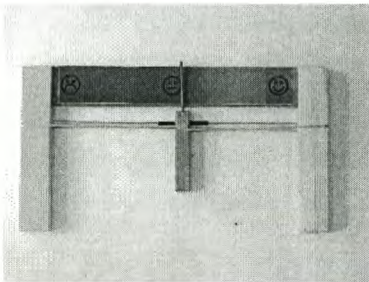
In composing the focus groups the participating towns, communities and individuals were selected through a process of nomination that could ensure socio-economic, cultural and gender representivity. Selection entailed the following: Representatives of the Project Steering Committee have been asked to indicate crucial towns, areas or communities which were considered to be "burning points" for public participation. The WC Project co-ordinator first consulted with the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) co-ordinator of the local municipality and requested the IDP co-ordinator to indicate the various living areas and social groupings within the town on a map of the town. The WCD Project co-ordinator then selected the households from a list of erven for participation in the focus group session. A local recruiter who has been appointed by the WCD Project co-ordinator then collected the participants for the focus group sessions. In terms of the interviews managers have been interviewed, depending on their availability. The same rule applied for the questionnaires, which have been forwarded to selected senior provincial officials (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

3.3.1.4 Other Methods and Instruments

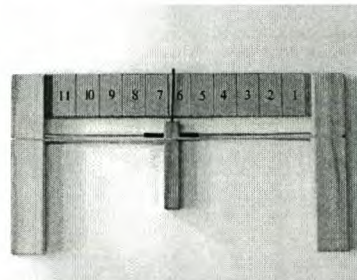
(a) The Priority Index

The priority index (P-Index) designed and patented by Schutte (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2002) was applied under Scutte's own guidance to prioritise community needs for planning of services and development . The advantage of this instrument is that it enables respondents of lower educated and uneducated levels to communicate in a structured way without being able to read or write. The scale is set as a wooden instrument on which the respondent can physically indicate his or her perception on the importance of issues and current satisfaction with the way in which issues are dealt with.

Side facing the participant



Side facing the fieldworker

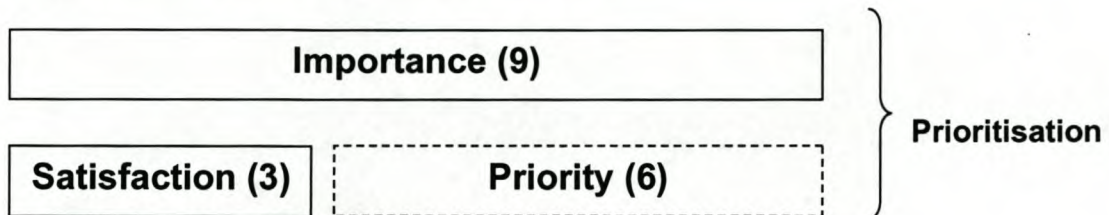


(Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003)

In terms of the Schutte scale the priority of the issue is calculated by subtracting the satisfaction level from the importance level. Diagram 9 below illustrates the calculation process. The numbers used in this calculation was obtained by requiring the participants to indicate the importance of issues and their satisfaction with the way in which these issues have been addressed. Participants had to assign a number on a scale from one to ten by moving the scale towards the right or left. The participants themselves first generated the issues. Such issues were ranked according to the P-Index results. It is crucial that the diagrams emanating from the P-Index results must be interpreted alongside the reasons that were given for the existence of such issues. The

reasons justify and explain the cause and extent of the issues (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

Diagram 9: Prioritisation process calculation



(Source: *PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*)

(b) Interviews

Structured interviews aimed at determining the communication needs of the business sector were also conducted. Telephonic interviews based upon questionnaires were conducted with selected businesses contributing significantly to the economic growth of the West Coast district.

3.3.2 WCD Project Findings

3.3.2.1 Community Perceptions of Municipality

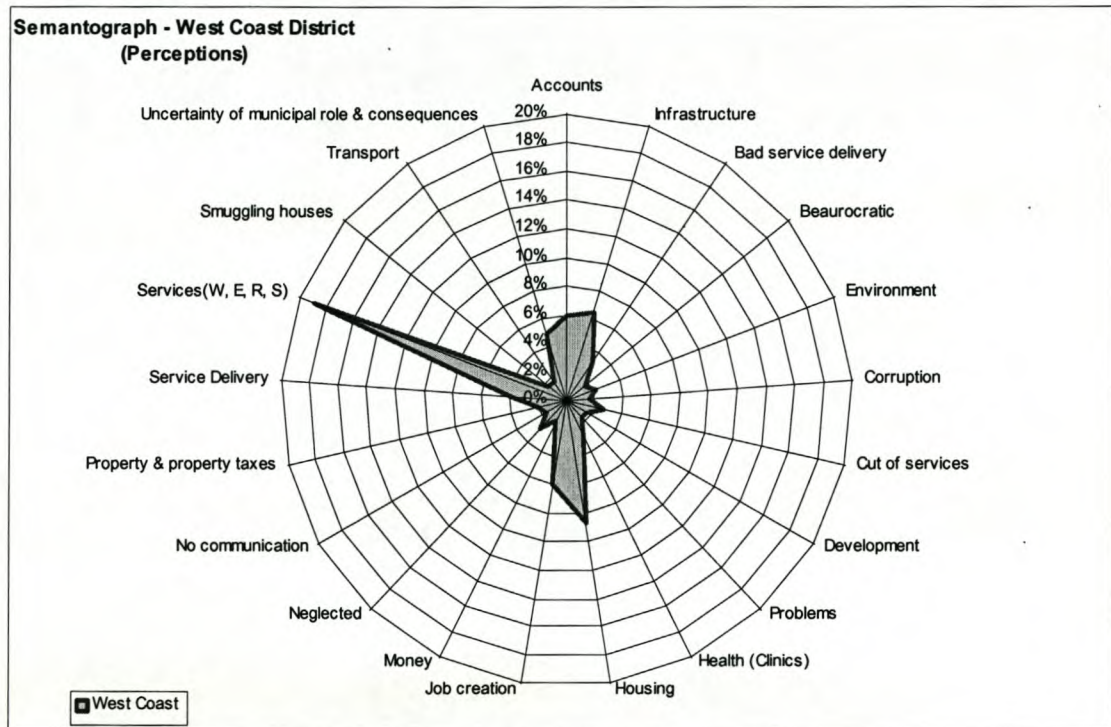
The following findings relate to the perceptions that the general public hold about their Local Municipality. The diagrams (semantographs) serve as an illustration to reflect the WC community's attitudes, perceptions and their beliefs regarding their local municipalities (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

These semantic expressions as illustrated by the semantographs therefore represent impressions or perceptions that people have of municipalities in the West Coast District.

Whether these perceptions stem from a positive or negative content is reflected in the reasons that underlie the Priority Index (P-Index) measurements (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*). Such underlying reasons will be discussed at a

later stage. Diagram 10 reveals information extracted from the above mentioned associations or perception consolidated into one diagram.

Diagram 10: Semantograph – West Coast District Perceptions
(Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003)



The table (Table 1) below represents a summary of the data contained in diagram 10. It indicates the various associations of community members (e.g. housing) and the percentage importance or priority of such association.

Association	Priority
Service delivery	18.9%
Housing	8.6%
Infrastructure	6.5%
Accounts	5.9%
Job creation	5.9%
Uncertainty about role of	4.9%

municipality	
Bad service	3.8%
Bureaucratic	2%
Environment	2.3%
Corruption	1.9%
Cut off services	2.8%
Development	1.9%
Problems	1.9%
Health	3%
Money	1.8%
Neglected	3%
No communication	1.9%
Property taxes	2%
Smuggling houses	1.9%
Transport	1.8%

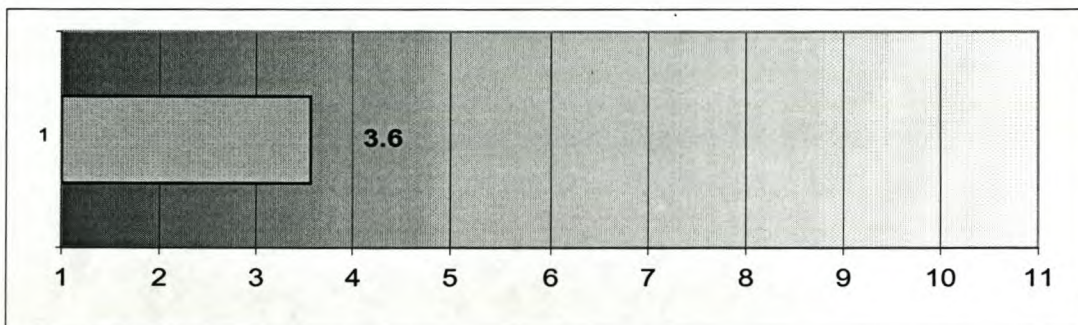
*Table 1: Summary of West Coast District Perceptions
(Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003).*

Based on the above diagram, several observations can be made. Firstly, municipalities in the West Coast District are primarily associated by participants with service delivery (18,9%) housing (8,6%), infrastructure (6,5%), job creation (5,9%), accounts (5,9%) and with 4,9% being uncertain about the role of the municipality (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

3.3.2.2 Community Perceptions of Current Communication

Of special interest for this thesis are the perceptions of the WC community about their communication with their local municipalities. Diagram 11 illustrates the WCD community's perception of communication with the respective local municipalities. Although measured as a perception, the communication experience was expressed as being an average of 3.6 on a scale varying from 1 (i.e. bad) to 11 (i.e. good). This measurement indicates a general dissatisfaction with the current level of communication (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

Diagram 11: Community perception on communication with the local municipality (Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003)

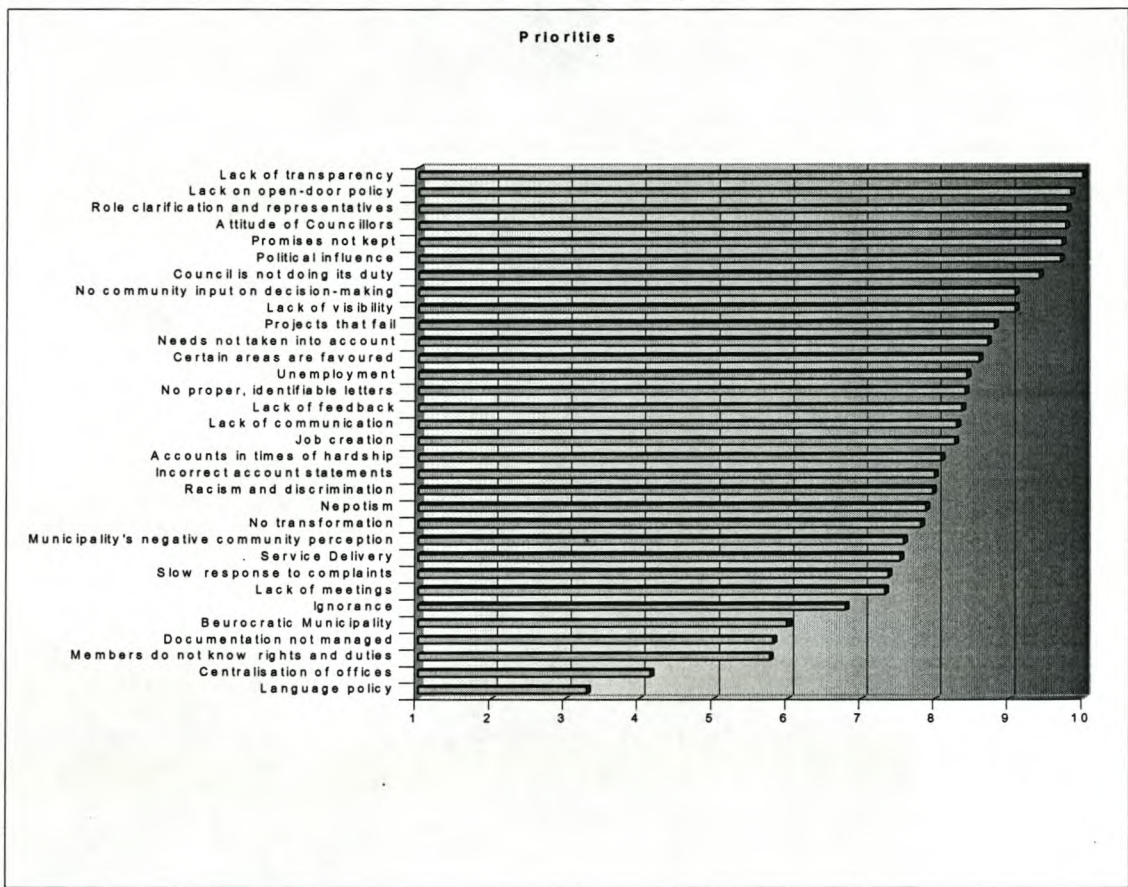


Respondents were also required to provide supportive reasons for their communication evaluation as discussed in the previous paragraph. A close examination of the reasons that respondents gave for the relative poor state of communication seems to be a general experience that the community feels uninformed. Another possibility could be that the municipalities are simply unaware of the communication needs of the community and therefore fail to respond on such needs (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

Diagram 12 below represents the reasons that community members gave for their previous evaluation of communication with their municipalities. The reasons in Diagram 12 therefore support the above measurement of perception on

communication (Diagram 11) and indicate what causes communication breakdown between the community and their local municipality.

Diagram 12: Reasons for perception of communication.
(Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003).



The table below (Table 2) contains a summary of the in diagram 12. It indicates a variety of reasons that were provided by community members substantiating their evaluation of communication with their local municipality (e.g. lack of transparency) and the percentage importance or priority of such reason.

Priority/ Reason	Priority
Lack of transparency	9.9%

Lack of open door policy	9.8%
Role clarification	9.8%
Allude of councilors	9.8%
Promises not kept	9.8%
Political influence	9.8%
Council not doing its duty	9.8%
No community inputs	9%
Lack of visibility	9%
Needs not taken into account	8.6%
Certain areas are favored	8.4%
No proper, identifiable letters	8.2%
Lack of feedback	8.2%
Lack of communication	8.2%
Job creation	8.2%
Accounts in times of hardship	8%
Incorrect account statements	7.9%
Racism and discrimination	7.8%
Nepotism	7.7%
No transformation	7.6%
Municipality's negative perception of the community	7.5%
Service delivery	7.4%
Slow response to complaints	7.2%
Lack of meetings	7.2%
Ignorance	6.7%
Municipal bureaucracy	5.9%
Documentation not managed	5.8%
Members do not know rights and duties	5.8%

Centralization of offices	4.1%
Language policy	3.2%

Table 2: Summary of reasons for perception of communication.

(Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003).

3.3.2.3 Communication gap

The WCD project also served to establish the overlaps in terms of current communication media. The communication overlap is evident where a specific medium is evaluated in terms of its current and desired means of communication. The results were categorised into four classifications namely over exploited, under exploited, not desired and desired communication media. The research results revealed that over exploited media included newsletters, notices, local newspaper, daily newspaper and religious institutions such as missionary stations (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

The media that are currently used and not desired included word of mouth, megaphone, self-efforts and accounts. The media that are currently under exploited were meetings, personal and telephonic communication. The media that are currently not applied (although desired by interviewed community members) included information offices, libraries, pamphlets and posters (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

3.3.2.4 Content

The WCDM Project (2003) also focussed on the content of what people want to be communicated about by the local municipality. The results are shown in Diagram 13 as percentages of the total number of responses received during the discussions (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

Diagram 13: Desired communication content

(Source: *PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

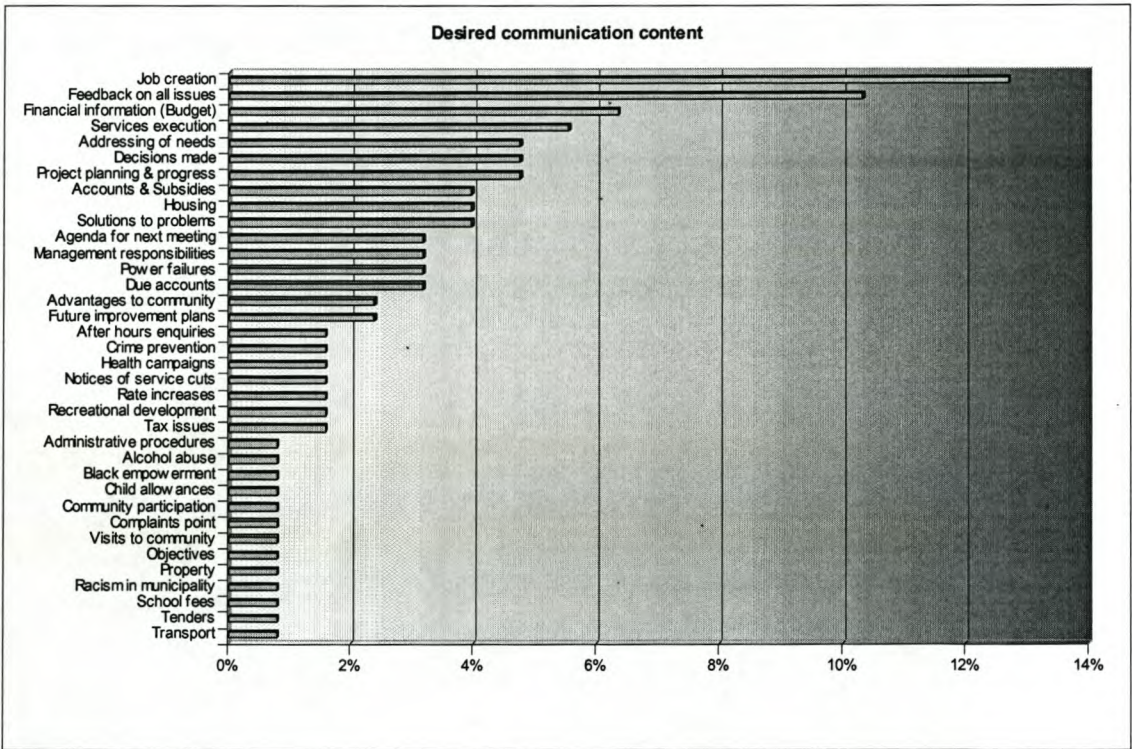


Table 3 (below) summarizes the findings on desired communication content in the WCD by indicating the desired communication topic (e.g. job creation) and the corresponding priority rating.

Content	Rating/ Percentage
Job creation	12.6%
Feedback on all issues	10.4%
Financial information	6.4%
Execution of services	5.4%
Addressing of needs	4.8%
Decisions made	4.8%
Project planning and progress	4.8%
Accounts and Subsidies	3.9%
Housing	3.9%
Solutions to problems	3.9%
Agenda setting	3.1%
Management responsibilities	3.1%
Power failures	3.1%
Outstanding accounts	3.1%
Advantages to community	2.2%
Future improvement plans	2.2%
Enquiries after office hours	1.6%
Crime prevention	1.6%
Health campaigns	1.6%
Notice of service cuts	1.6%
Rate increases	1.6%
Recreational development	1.6%
Tax issues	1.6%
Administrative procedures	1%

Alcohol abuse	1%
Black empowerment	1%
Child allowances	1%
Community participation	1%
Complaints point	1%
Visits to community	1%
Objectives	1%
Property	1%
Racism in municipality	1%
School fees	1%
Tenders	1%
Transport	1%

Table 3: Summary of desired communication content

(Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003).

3.3.2.5 Internal Communication Practices

In order to obtain information on the current municipal communication practices and the effectiveness thereof (both intra- and inter municipal), semi-structured personal interviews were conducted a selection of responsible senior and middle managers of the municipalities involved. Similar interviews were also conducted with officials from the provincial government. At first a thumbprint questionnaire that was developed and piloted, before the actual interviews were conducted. The purpose of this part of the survey was to yield qualitative data that would reveal the current communication practices and the respondent's perception regarding the effective use and application thereof.

The current communication methods used among and within the various municipalities include formal letters, telephonic communication, e-mail, face-to-

face (i.e. personal) communication and meetings. The findings regarding each of these means deserve further discussion.

(a) Formal letters

In the case of intra-municipal communication, formal letters appear to be the standard means of communication within and among the various municipal departments. It was detected in nearly all interviews with the respondents that in most cases formal letters are either preceded or followed up with personal or telephonic contact (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

In the instance of inter-municipal communication, the research done revealed that although this was the general accepted way of communication, respondents indicated that the use of formal letters as a means of communication is ineffective. It appeared that those respondents who are managers seem to have rated the effectiveness of formal written communication higher than those respondents who are not managers. The issues that are usually communicated relate to requests for funding (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

This could be interpreted as a general lack of a fast and efficient communication system. The current situation necessitates innovative communication procedures and systems that are responsive to the demands of fast and efficient communication. Such procedures and systems must also be able to cope with the increased size of the current municipal boundaries of the WCDM (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

(b) Telephone

The research indicated that with intra-municipal communication, the telephone is often used to confirm the content and the reception of written documents. According to the respondents it is also employed to obtain information needed to perform certain tasks. Some of the respondents also mentioned that the

telephone interrupts them in the performance of their daily work because they are constantly responding to calls (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

In the case of inter-municipal communication, telephonic communication appears to be rated higher in terms of effectiveness. It seems to be the way people from different municipalities communicate with each other. As already mentioned, a formal letter would often follow telephonic communication, but its effectiveness is rated higher than merely sending a written document pertaining to a specific issue (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*). In short, a communication system that accommodates all the available media is needed where each medium is to be used in its rightful place according to what it is designed for and where it is the most functional (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

(c) E-mail

As far as intra-municipal communication is concerned, the research indicated that a large number of officials seem to be aware of the usefulness of electronic media. Unfortunately, a number of factors hinder the effective application of electronic media in West Coast municipalities. It includes factors such as the unavailability of electronic technology to some members of staff, and a lack of training in computer literacy. Also, officials who are utilising electronic media such as e-mail, do so in an environment that cannot enable optimal functioning of electronic media. Another factor contributing to this unsatisfactory situation is the fact that official e-mail messages are still printed out and filed in the traditional hard copy filing system (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

In the case of inter-municipal communication, e-mail is effectively applied if both the sender and receiver of information are known to be computer literate and also geared with the necessary technology. It appears to be that this means of communication is highly under-utilised and the full potential of the electronic or digital communication media is still to be explored (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

It is evident from research done that there is currently a serious need of a communication system/directive to deal with modern communication technology like e-mail (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*). The advantage of electronic media is its capability to overcome distance. Also, the possibilities for the use of electronic media in effective governance are numerous.

(d) Face-to-face communication

In the process of intra-municipal communication officials see face-to-face communication as important, but research showed that the effectiveness thereof varies from low to high. When analysing the research results regarding face-to-face communication, it is evident that those respondents who thought that this was an effective means of communication, did so because of the nature of their jobs. The typical information they need to communicate is not that cannot easily be documented, for example site inspections. Respondents who evaluated the effectiveness of face-to-face communication as being low, felt that they could not rely upon the sender of the message following up on the message to ensure that the message was correctly understood and interpreted by the receiver thereof, and therefore implemented correctly (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

As far as inter-municipal communication is concerned, this seems to be the preferred means of communication, mainly because of the type of issues involved in inter-municipal communication. This could be interpreted as an overall inability to convey messages on paper, hence the belief that talking to the person will make the communication process less confusing (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

(e) Meetings

Research revealed that respondents view meetings as a means of intra municipal communication very divergently. The reactions are clearly linked to the post level of respondents. Apart from managers, most respondents were frank

about meetings saying that though sometimes necessary, it is “usually a waste of time”. It seems that in general, meetings are scheduled on a regular basis to inform the middle management on organizational developments. However, meetings sometimes include aspects that do not affect all attendees directly. Adding to this attitude, their heavy workload causes a general negativity towards meetings as a means of communication. Thus everyone does not share managers’ positive perception of meetings as an important and effective way of communication to other staff members, especially when they are not part of management (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

In terms of inter-municipal communication, meetings seem to have developed into the standard communication vehicle for sharing information between municipalities, especially between the DM and the other municipalities. Respondents, with a few exceptions, thereof rate the effectiveness as high. Officials who are normally involved in meetings often complain that it is very time consuming, especially when travelling time has to be budgeted for. Officials also stated that there are loads of paperwork brought about by meetings and that they are often out of office which causes time constraints in terms of their own time management (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In the light of the above analyses the following summarising observations can be made. Firstly, the WCD Project instrument was described. It was explained that the Project findings were obtained by the use of focus groups and semi-selected structured interviews with members of the community and officials.

Secondly, the project findings were discussed. The main findings included (i) community perceptions about two aspects namely their local municipality and communication with their local municipality, (ii) communication gaps and overlaps relating to communication media, (iii) desired communication content, and (iv) an

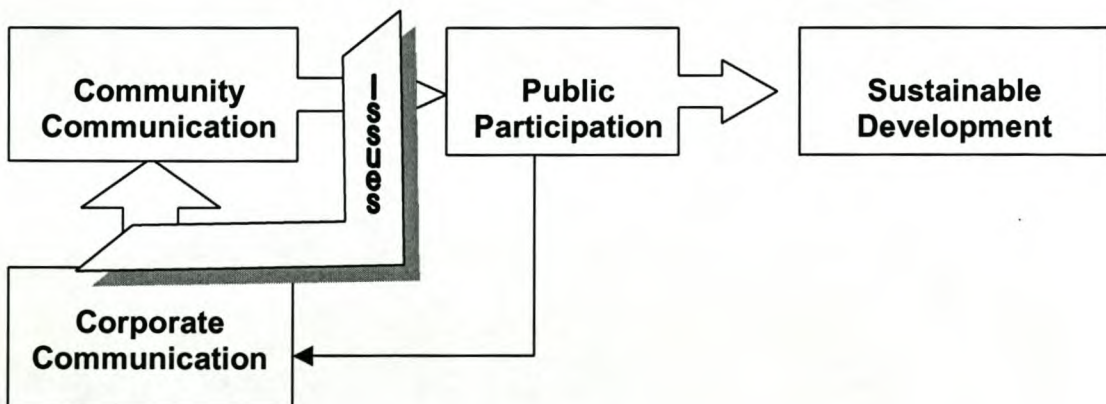
evaluation of current media within the municipal context (i.e. internal communication).

Thirdly, it was found that there could be no successful community communication strategy enhancing participation when community perceptions (toned by local issues and concerns) are ignored or avoided. Local issues and concerns need to be addressed for people to be willing to participate meaningfully.

Fourthly, the perceptions and issues preventing successful public participation cannot be addressed without an appropriate corporate communication strategy. The latter is aimed at ensuring that all officials understand the issues at stake, the community communication strategy and the development purposes of participation.

Diagram 14 below illustrates the second and third observations. It shows how community issues and concerns could (if ignored or avoided) hinder effective participation and finally sustainable development. Not only will ill-treated issues and concerns prevent participation and sustainable development, but could also have a negative effect on communication by causing a communication breakdown between the municipality and the community.

Diagram 14: Community issues, communication, public participation and sustainable development.



CHAPTER 4

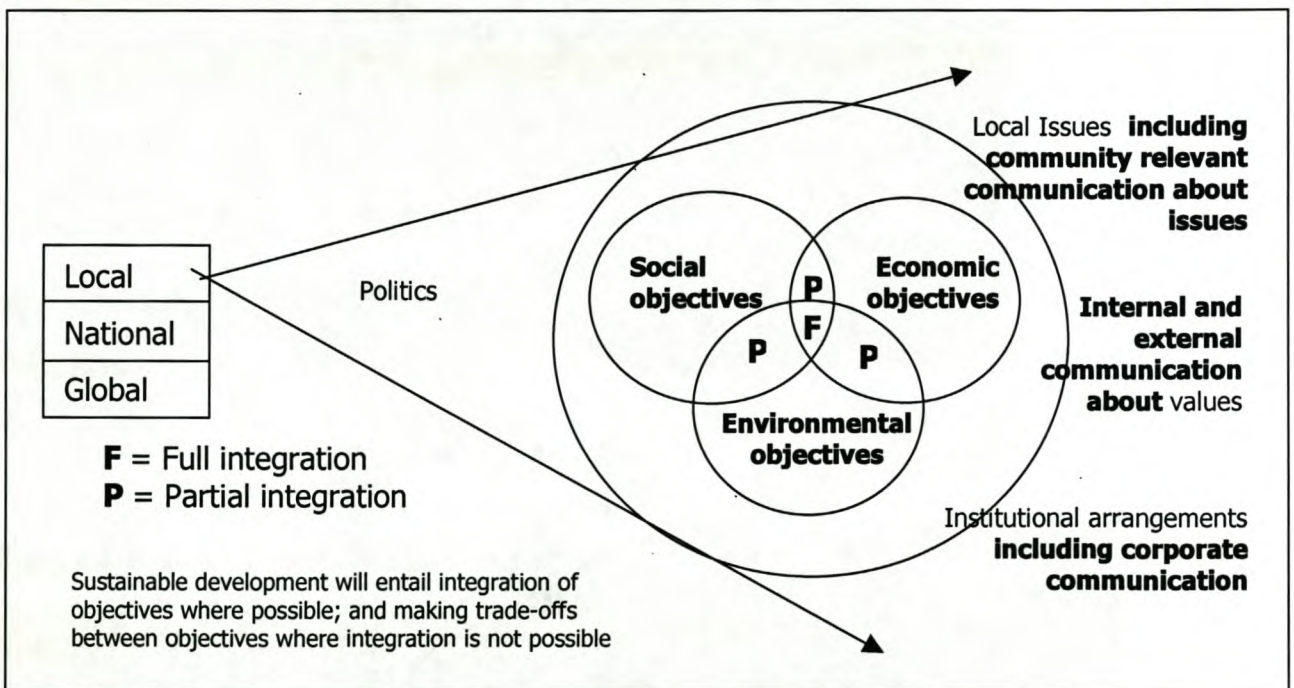
INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It was concluded from the WCD Project in Chapter 3 that an appropriate communication strategy for enhanced participation must pay attention to context specific perceptions (toned by local issues and concerns), community relevant communication as well as appropriate corporate communication.

In this chapter an interpretation of the West Coast District (WCD) Project results will be given. Data that was generated during the course of the Project research will now be interpreted using the theory in Chapter 2 as a backdrop to this analysis. Diagram 3 below (also see Chapter 2) is an adapted version of the original model and confirms the conclusions drawn in Chapter 3.

Diagram 3: Sustainable development and local government model (adapted from Dalal-Clayton and Bass, 2000).



4.2 INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSES

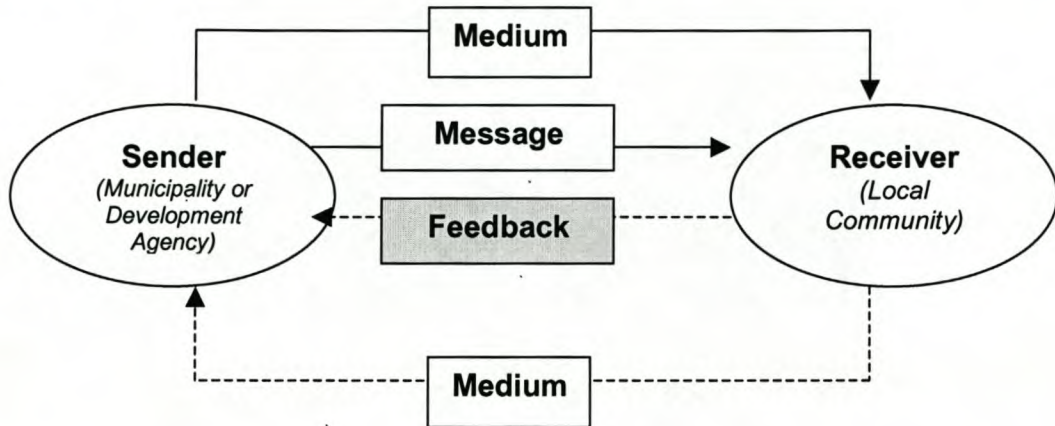
The interpretation and analyses of the findings and results of the WCD Project as described in the previous Chapter characterises this part of the discussion. A detailed discussion of communication problems referred to in the previous Chapter is provided below.

4.2.1 Communication, Participation and Feedback

As explained in Chapter 2, the communication process can be illustrated through various communication approaches and corresponding models. In Chapter 2 four various approaches to the communication process were described and analysed in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. The four approaches included the mechanistic approach, the humanistic approach, the contextual approach and the group approach.

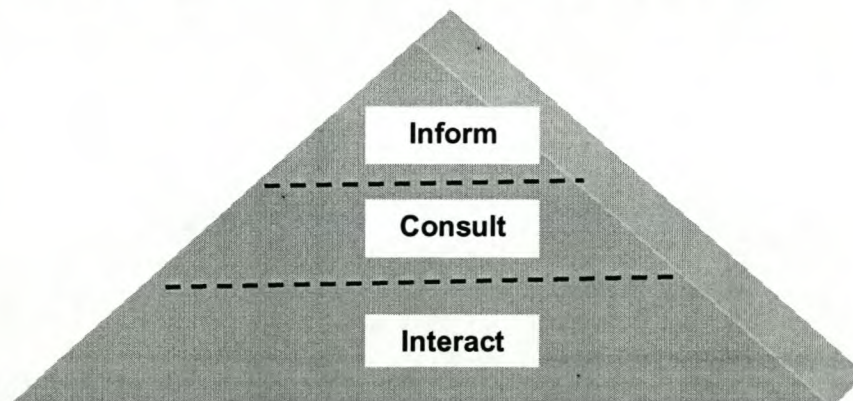
The humanistic approach was commended for its ability to facilitate interaction during the communication process, by providing for a feedback mechanism (Sanford et al , 1976:16). Diagram 5 below illustrates the humanistic approach as described in Chapter2. Other communication approaches tend to be linear (in one direction) and between two participating parties or entities (i.e. the sender and the receiver). By providing feedback the receiver is enabled to give inputs (including constructive criticism, request for further information and elaboration on information received) into the process rendering the entire communication process to be more participative and interactive in nature.

Diagram 5: The Humanistic Approach (see Chapter2). Adapted from Sanford et al (1976:16).



It is for this very reason (i.e. its interactive nature) that the humanistic approach to communication is important to the process of public participation in local government. In Chapter 2 it was also mentioned that there are various forms or levels of public participation, each suitable for different participation objectives. Therefore, depending on the desired outcome(s) of participation, different types of participation will be applied. The levels of participation include the transfer or dissemination of information; consultation with the parties involved and affected, as well interaction with affected parties (DANCED, 1998:7). Diagram 15 below serves as an illustration of the levels or forms of public participation, starting with interaction at the bottom of the pyramid, consultation in the middle, and informing at the apex.

Diagram 15: Levels of Communication (DANCED, 1998: 7).



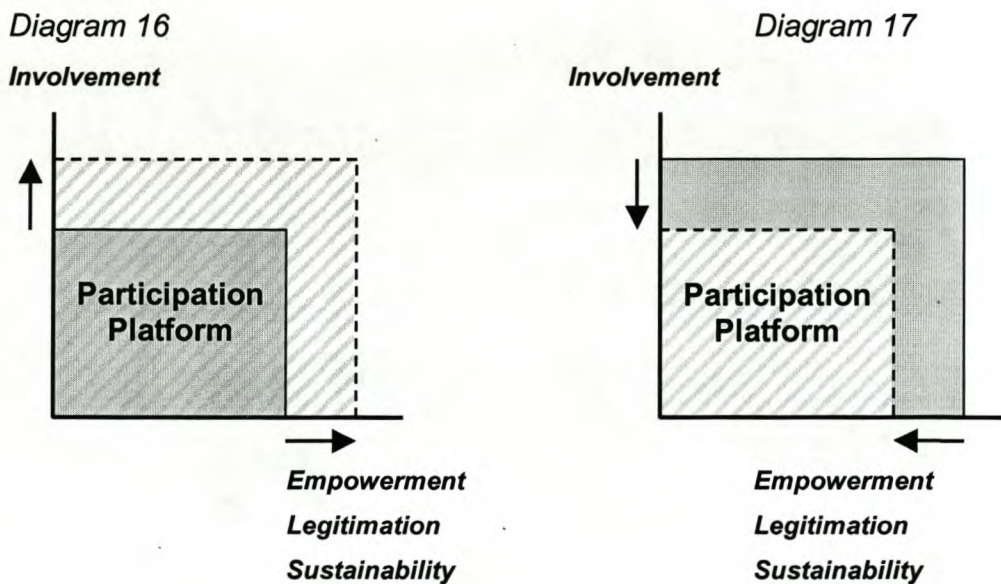
As illustrated by the pyramid in the diagram above, *informing* the community signifies the most superficial form of participation for the purposes of this research, and marks the beginning of the participation process at a strategic level. The process of informing the community includes the dissemination of information through the use and application of various communication media (DANCED, 1998:7). Information to the community in the developmental context includes information regarding development initiatives, information to stimulate potential change in the community, and information on gaining access to communication and communication media (Barker, 2001:5). The previous discussion on development communication models, especially models relating to information dissemination, innovation dissemination and grass roots awareness-raising (see Development Communication in Chapter 2), highlights this aspect. The diffusion of information during participation is therefore strongly linked to communication - the latter being the process that ensures that information messages are transferred. As pointed out in discussions about the development communication models, the dissemination of information during the participation process is facilitated by one-way communication, employing vertical top-down approaches to communication and decision-making (Kotze, 1997:39).

Consultation (refer to the diagrams 16 and 17) constitutes a more complex type of participation and forms the next level of participation, which may be related to the tactical level of organizational activities. Consultation takes place where the community is involved before the final decision-making (DANCED, 1998:7). According to the Webster Dictionary to "consult" includes the interchanging of advice, council or information. Consultation tends to indicate almost exclusively the receiving of advice (Marckwardt et al, 1992: 281).

When consulting with the community there is also a mutual receiving and exchange of information and advice. At the consultation level of participation the community is more involved than for instance where they were merely informed,

but there are still no transfer or sharing of *responsibilities*, which are vital to the empowerment and development of individuals in communities (Swanepoel,1997:6). It is important to bear in mind that by increasing the community's involvement in developmental and local government initiatives, the chances of success and sustainability of initiatives are enhanced as people give their endorsement and support for such initiatives. The adverse is also true - by limiting involvement information would be fed to the community and into the communication system but people will be less inclined to legitimate and claim ownership of the initiative. Diagrams 16 (left) and 17 (right) illustrate the effects of increased (diagram 16) and decreased (diagram 17) community involvement on participation. In both diagrams the striped squares reflect the effects on the participation (MBM Change Agents, 2003).

Diagrams 16 and 17: The effects of increased (Diagram 16) and decreased (Diagram 17) community involvement on participation (adapted from MBM Change Agents, 2003).

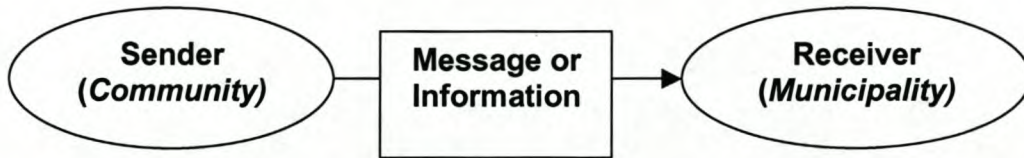


The next level of participation is interaction where the extent of involvement is increased and people are incorporated in a process of joint decision-making with

local government (DANCED, 1998:7). This is accompanied by an approach of participatory learning, where the municipality or development agency must be willing to learn from the community with regards to the context and indigenous (unique) knowledge of the community, as they inform and engage into consultation with the community (Kotze, 1997:41). In this process of participatory learning the flow of information becomes crucial. The participating organization(s) and institution(s) require information to be communicated to and from one another. The flow of communication through various channels or media (be it horizontal, vertical or lateral) is vital for interaction and participation to take place, bearing in mind that the structure of and networks within the organization and institution influences the flow of communication, the degree to which members have access to communicate with one another and ultimately also the learning process (Fox et al, 1991:156). The mere fact that the interaction and learning (interactive learning requires communication, the latter should have a mechanism ensuring that the transfer of information (which is vital to learning) flows freely in both directions – from the sender to the recipient and from the recipient to the receiver. It is at this point that the humanistic approach based on human interaction becomes important to the debate.

In the case study scenario the *community* became the sender of information, transmitting information regarding their perceptions about the municipality, their perceptions about communication with the municipality, their communication needs, - expectations and preferred media of communication to the municipality. In this way community needs were established and existing information was updated (Swanepoel, 1997:95-96). This approach is different from the usual or traditional scenario where the *municipality* is the sender and transmits information regarding municipal affairs, service delivery, accounts, elections and other political events to the community. Diagram 18 illustrates the case study scenario where the traditional communication roles were inverted and the community became the sender of information.

Diagram 18: Inverted traditional communication roles (adapted from Sanford et al, 1976:16).



By consulting the community and by making the community the source of information, important data and information were generated (Swanepoel, 1997:97-98), as described and set out in the case study findings and results. The data and information that was acquired included the following areas: community perceptions (about the municipality and communication with the municipality), communication communicated to), and communication media (the ways in which the community prefers to communicate to and receive information from the municipality). The municipality as receiver of information must however also have an appropriate corporate communications set-up, or else the message or information will be lost in any case.

4.2.2 Community Perceptions

As discussed in Chapter 2 individual perception derives from past experiences of people, their value systems, levels of education and their psychological makeup. In communication perceptions are important because it influence the way in which people receive and interpret messages (Hunt, 1989). As explained in Chapter 2 people perceive their social realities in different ways depending on a number of factors. The perception of reality is referred to as the frame of reference and communication are most effective when frames of reference overlap or correspond. For the purposes of this research it was necessary to determine community perceptions in order to establish the position of the community in terms of their municipality and communication with their municipality.

The WCD community's perception on their local municipality was established and clarified (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*) and reflected what municipalities in the West Coast District represent to their community members. It is evident that the WCD community members predominantly associate their local municipalities with issues pertaining to service delivery, housing, infrastructure, accounts and job creation (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*).

Perceptions like uncertainty in terms of the role of the municipality, bad services and a feeling of neglect clearly reflect information regarding the content of people's view of the municipality (whether the content of a perception or view is positive or negative). Knowing the content of perception enables the municipality obtain an image of how the community views them. According to Walker (1997:11) perceptions can be used to measure municipal performance and service levels. It can also be used to identify areas where its performance and public image can be improved or rectified. This essential for enhancing participation by making people feel that participation is worthwhile.

Whether the perceptions hold a positive or negative content is reflected in the reasons that underlie the Priority Index (P-Index) measurements (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*). During the WCD project participants were required to give their perception on the current level of communication with their local municipality. Community members were of the opinion that communication was dissatisfactory and gave it an average rate of 3.6 on a scale ranging varying from 1 (i.e. extremely bad) to 11 (i.e. extremely good).

The priority reasons for the current community perception on communication with the municipality include a lack of transparency, lack of openness, a need for a clear role clarification of the municipality, allude of councillors, promises to community members that are not kept, political interference and the Council not doing its duty (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*). The reasons given may

seemingly paint a gloomy picture but this information could be utilised to improve the current communication situation. Effective communication is characterised by feedback (see discussion under 4.2.1). Walker (1997:11) stated that effective communication as a two-way process means that the outgoing message is transformed and moulded by its response, i.e. the message that returns. Community perceptions can therefore be viewed as a source of information and can be applied as a barometer for municipal performance. It is indispensable that when devising a communication strategy, one needs to deal with the perceptions emanating from the community.

4.2.3 Content: Communication Needs

As mentioned earlier in the section on sustainable development in Chapter 2 of this thesis, development is aimed at raising people's standard of living (Todaro, 1989:620). Development also involves the improvement of people's self-esteem and increasing their freedom to choose for themselves in order to contribute to and shape their own social reality. As stated by Coetzee and Graaff (1996:317) "People have a right to live in a life-world that is meaningful to them and they are able to contribute actively to the constitution of such a life world ..."

Thus, the ultimate goal of raising people's standard of living is to create a social reality that is acceptable to the people living it. When creating an acceptable social reality or life people need to participate in the creation process thereof by choosing for themselves and by communicating their needs and their own expectations (Kellerman, 1997:52). People also need to be enabled to provide their solutions, based on their own knowledge of themselves and their peculiar environment. This provides a basis for the sustainability of the development initiative (Kellerman, 1997:51).

It is at this point that the distinction between participation and communication becomes vague. People have a right to participate in development and in

government initiatives affecting their lives (section 52 of the Constitution, Act 108/1996). In earlier definitions of participation (see Chapter 2), it is noticeable that the construct of participation includes various aspects namely representivity ([http://www.sn.apc.org/users/clc/localgovt/bulletin/01\(1\)cp.htm](http://www.sn.apc.org/users/clc/localgovt/bulletin/01(1)cp.htm)), involvement (Craythorne, 1993:73), and empowerment to ensure certain outcomes, namely to establish ownership in terms of development and to exercise influence in decision-making (Kellerman, 1997:52). In order to make these aspects or characteristics and their outcomes possible, an internal process (i.e. communication) has to be set into motion.

In order for people have ownership and influence (i.e. participate), they need to be guided into a communicative process that facilitates and enables dialogue between them and the development agency (i.e. local, national or provincial government) to ensure the effectiveness of participation and the success of the development initiative. The two processes happen concurrently: communication acting as a catalyst for participation. For communicative dialogue to take place, participation should meet certain preconditions namely it should be defined in terms of its components and characteristics. The objectives for participation should also be clearly stated even in the initial stages, i.e. whether specific participation initiatives are meant to be informative, consultative or interactive (DANCED 1998:7).

In the WCD project the research was aimed at getting inputs from the community, allowing the community to set the agenda for communication needs and messages. In deciding on what messages to communicate about, the WCD project adopted a bottom up approach by consulting the community (Kotze,1997:40). Interaction took place when the community's communication needs were translated into messages (i.e. the messages were generated by the community needs) and incorporated in the WC communication and participation strategy (Fourie,1982:11,16). The community were included in a process of joint decision-making with their local government, in this way positively contributing

towards the improvement of their own social reality or life-world (Coetzee & Graaff, 1996:317).

According to the WCD community priority issues include job creation, feedback on all issues, financial information and execution of services. These prioritised issues also represent the issues that the community wish to communicate about and to receive more information on (*PricewaterhouseCoopers*, 2003).

When comparing the WCD project results about communication content with the results of the perceptions about the municipality, the similarities are striking. This indicates that people's expectations and perceptions of the sender (i.e. local municipality) underlie what people wish to be communicated about. Such expectations together with communication needs subsequently form the content to be communicated about (Fourie, 1982:11,16). When designing a communication and participation strategy, it is advisable that issues relating to expectations and content should be used in creating the key messages for the communication strategy.

4.2.4 Communication Media

Communication media is defined as channels through which selected messages are communicated to target audiences. In the WCD Project findings, communication media were aimed getting information to the people living in that area (*PricewaterhouseCoopers*, 2003). It was also mentioned earlier that the WC population comprises 6% of the provincial population spread over an area of 31 000 square km (<http://www.capewestcoast.org/RegionalInfo/populationMain.htm>). This poses a unique challenge in terms of getting vital and sometimes critical information to people in distant communities and the media that will applied to address the specific local issues of isolated communities who have limited access to information. This requires media that will be able to conquer the geographical distance between communities and local government

(*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*) such as community radio, centrally located or even mobile information centres, internet and e-mail facilities, and telephones (Barker, 2001:11-12).

Another challenge relates to dealing with the high levels of illiteracy within the WCD. As discussed in the background to the WCD project, the levels of training indicate the ability of people to find employment opportunities and to create prosperity (<http://www.capewestcoast.org/RegionalInfo/PopulationMain.htm>). The existing levels of training points out the level at which communication ought to take place. According to Swanepoel and De Beer, (1996:4) this includes aspects such as the way of talking, i.e. academic or layman use of language. Another aspect is the type of language, i.e. which of the 11 (eleven) official languages of South Africa is represented strongly (Van Staden et al, 2002: 4-5).

The low levels of training and literacy in the WCD is an indication that the media to be used to communicate messages to the WCD communities should be verbal, visual, easily accessible, cost effective and user friendly. The use of language when communicating should also be clear and simple (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1996:5). It is advisable to utilise media such as community forums and gatherings as they provide opportunity for open discussions and debate (Foundation for Contemporary Research, 2001:iv-v). Other possible media are theatre, commuter channels and photo novella (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:71).

During the WCD project, participants were required to indicate their views on the application and value of current communication media. Participants were required to rate available media according to four classifications. The classifications included current available media being over exploited, under exploited, desired, and not desired. Participants were also required to indicate which of the media were available. The table below (Table 4) represents a summary of the research results pertaining to communication media. The data

contained in the table was obtained from the WCDM Research Report (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003).

MEDIA	OVER EXPLOITED	NOT DESIRED	UNDER EXPLOITED	DESIRED	AVAILABLE
<i>Newsletters</i>					
<i>Notices</i>					
<i>Local newspaper</i>					
<i>Newspaper</i>					
<i>Church</i>					
<i>Word of Mouth</i>					
<i>Mega phone</i>					
<i>Self Efforts</i>					
<i>Accounts</i>					
<i>Meetings</i>					
<i>Personal Contact</i>					
<i>Telephone</i>					
<i>Information Centre</i>					
<i>Pamphlets</i>					
<i>Library</i>					
<i>Posters</i>					

Table 4: Summary findings on communication media (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003).

Based on the above table and the WCD Project findings in Chapter 3 of this thesis, a number of observations can be made (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*). The desired media (as indicated by the WC research participants) were also pointed out as media that are currently not available to the WCD community. Pamphlets, libraries, information centres and posters provide information in a cost effective way because people are not charged for the use of such media. It also makes information available more freely, especially if set-off points are centrally located. However, such media do not make provision for illiterate members of the community unless it utilise audio and/ or visual methods such a theatre, story telling, television or radio. Although community members of the WCD will have easy access to these media and will be able to afford the use thereof, illiterate or lowly educated members will not benefit from.

The WCD is geographically widely dispersed and some communities live in remote areas (<http://www.capewestcoast.org/RegionalInfo/PopulationMain.htm>). In order to reach out to communities in remote areas, information centres (as possible of communication channels) should be centrally located and if possible be situated close to the community. Existing community structures such as libraries, community information centres, schools and shops are within close proximity of community members and provide a possible solution to this challenge (Barker, 2001:12). The staff manning the community structures should be well equipped to deal with the peculiar circumstances of various community groupings (for example have the ability to deal with low levels of literacy) and be able to communicate in a way that will maximise the benefits of development initiatives and participation (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1996:ix).

In terms of under utilised media participants indicated that personal contact, meetings and telephonic communication are under utilised (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*). This indicates that these communication channels are desired and potentially effective but are not employed often enough to have an impact on communication. These media can also be applied to

address the problem of people living in remote areas. Contact by means of the telephone could provide a solution to reaching people in isolated places provided that they have the means to be contacted (i.e. either have their own telephone or have access to a telephone). According to Mersham et al (1995) in Barker (2001:12) increasingly more families in rural and urban areas are acquiring telephones due to (i) the commitment of network operators to provide coverage to areas currently poorly served by existing networks, and (ii) the installation of community pay telephones in townships and underprivileged areas.

The media identified as under utilised can also be employed to reach audiences who are illiterate. Meetings and personal contact (refer to Chapter 3) provide opportunity to reach audiences where training and literacy levels are low. Meetings and personal contact can also be combined with film and video techniques in order to overcome the barriers of illiteracy (Barker, 2001:10). It is interactive and makes immediate feedback on the communicated information possible. It also transfers the message verbally and with visual aids so that it is not necessary for the audience to be literate.

The media that were rated as over exploited and not desired, indicates that the current use of such media and maybe the media itself is ineffective (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*). Alternative applications of such media or alternative media should be considered. The communication medium selected depends on the content that needs to be communicated. Table 5 provides a summary of available communication media and their advantages (Engel et al (1994) in Mersham and Skinner, 2001:70).

Medium	Advantage
Employee publications	Treat subjects in depth
Booklets and manuals	Flexible and comprehensive
Newsletter	Easily prepared and cost effective.
Poster	Colourful, dramatic and draws attention.
Notice Boards and Information racks	Strategically placed.
Exhibits and displays	Draws attention and is highly flexible.
Closed-circuit television and teleconferencing	Compelling, involves the audience and is good for training purposes.
Motion pictures and video tapes	Inflexible and impersonal, but is good for the demonstration of processes.
Grapevines	Informal and timely.
Speeches and meetings	Provides for two-way communication and treats problems in depth.
Advisory groups	Provides for two-way communication and uses expertise.
Internet/ intranet/extranet/ web-based communication	Uses technology to enable communication

Table 5: Communication media (Engel et al (1994) in Mersham and Skinner, 2001:70)

The information contained in Table 5 can also be used to provide guidelines and suggestions when selecting suitable media for a communication strategy. These media are specifically tailored for internal communication in organizations such as local municipalities.

The purpose of consulting people is to allow people to (a) state their communication needs and (b) to state their preferred means of conveying and receiving messages from local government. Barker (2001:9) describe this as the

needs-based approach where the goal is to meet real and accurately defined needs as identified by community members. This is complimentary to the bottom-up approach to participation whereby decisions are taken jointly by local government and the community (Kotze, 1997:40). As discussed in Chapter 2, joint decision-making is based on a partnership where the perspectives and indigenous knowledge of the community are combined with the expertise and administrative skills of the local decision-makers to realise developmental goals (Kotze, 1997:41).

The inputs from the WCD community including their perceptions and knowledge of self and the environment therefore form the foundation for the communication and participation strategy of the WCDM. Not only was information and inputs obtained from the community but the municipality was also taken through a learning process in terms of the community whom it serves (Kotze, 1997:43).

4.2.5 Corporate Communication

Up to this point little attention has been given to the organizational aspect of communication. In the WCD Project, internal communication was addressed by investigating corporate communication practices within and among local municipalities. Mersham and Skinner (2001:68) define internal corporate communication as the various types of interaction that takes place between members of an organization. Internal communication has many aspects and can be viewed as (i) formal and informal and (ii) upwards meaning from the employees to the employer, and downwards meaning from the employer to the employees. (Refer to Chapter 2 for the discussion on the operation and working of organizational communication). Table 6 provides an explanatory grid of the previously mentioned aspects of internal communication and how such aspects relate to communication media and methods (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:68).

Process	Informal	Formal
1. Downward communication	Supervision, newsletters, e-mail, mass social functions	Briefing groups and sessions, written circulars, in-house publications (e.g. journals), notices, inductions, disciplinary procedures, training, public address system.
2. Upward communication	Participative management, working groups and teams	Liaison, committees, consultative committees, grievance procedures

Table 6: Aspects of internal communication (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:68).

According to the WCD project, senior and middle management respondents commented on the effectiveness of current communication and communication media (*PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2003*). This included both formal and informal communication as well as communication media. In the WCD project findings, the following areas were addressed namely meetings, face-to-face communication, newsletters, telephone, e-mail and formal letters. These areas are highlighted on the above table. Telephonic and face to face communication do not appear on this grid which emphasise that different organizations communicate in different ways and by means of different media. Written circulars are interpreted to have the same meaning as formal letters or memo's. When looking the highlighted areas on the table above, it is clear that (according to the WCD project findings) communication processes in WC municipalities whether formal or informal are mainly downward, i.e. from the higher organizational levels to the lower levels. This does not exclude the possibility that upward communication does not take place, but the project findings indicated that the tendency leaned more towards downward communication. In any organization

downward flows also tend to be more frequent than upward flows (Mersham & Skinner: 2001:40).

The tendencies in the flow of communication is linked to the organizational structure. Structure is the arrangement of components and subsystems in an organization and refers to the properties of the organization (Mersham & Skinner: 2001:32). There are various dimensions to structure namely formalisation, centralisation and the delegation of authority. An organizational chart or organogram serves as a description of the formal structure of an organization.

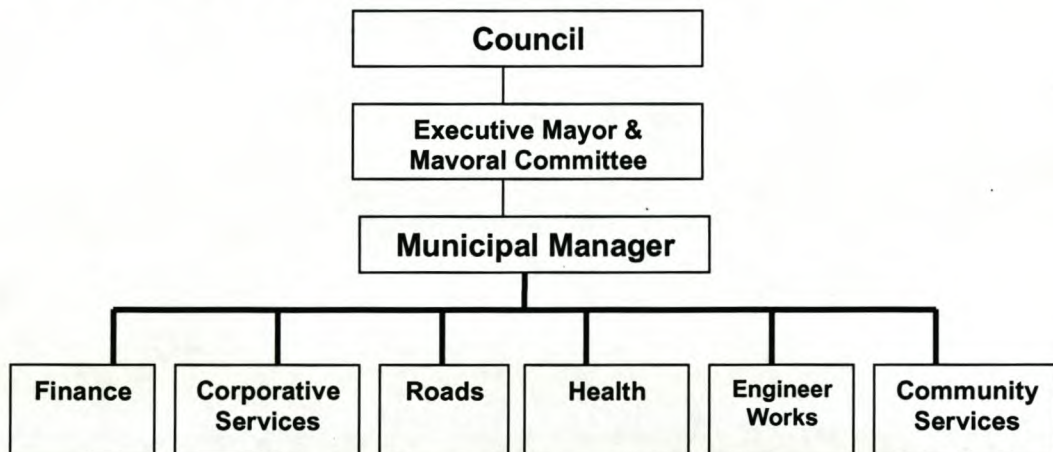
According to Mersham and Skinner (2001:32) organisational structure influences the behaviour of individuals in that organisation and therefore also has an effect on communication flows. The writers (2001:32) stated that organizations where high degrees of formalisation are prevalent tend to have a bureaucratic structure (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:34). Government organizations can be seen as typical bureaucracies and are characterised by rules and regulations, specialised division of tasks and a hierarchy of formal positions (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:36). The WCD municipalities are no exception. Structure affects communication to the extent that it limits and guides communication flows. Knowledge of the organizational structure as reflected by its organogram provides insight about the communication flows within it (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:39-40).

When looking at the WCD organizational chart (refer to Diagram 8 below) the reason why communication have a greater tendency to flow downwards as was found in the WCD project, can be ascribed to its structure which is aimed at centralisation and delegation. Tasks are specialised (hence the specific departments for each function) causing a greater need for instruction and information from the higher levels downwards. This illustrates the point made by Mersham and Skinner (2001:39-40) that structure guides communication flow.

Due to the bureaucratic nature of the WCD municipalities and the function of such structure, communication is directed in a downward direction.

Diagram 8 (also refer to Chapter 3) represents an organogram of the organizational structure of the WC District Municipality. The organisational structure of the District Municipality closely resembles the structure of the category B municipalities in the WCD. Minor individual differences (e.g. the number of directorates) may occur.

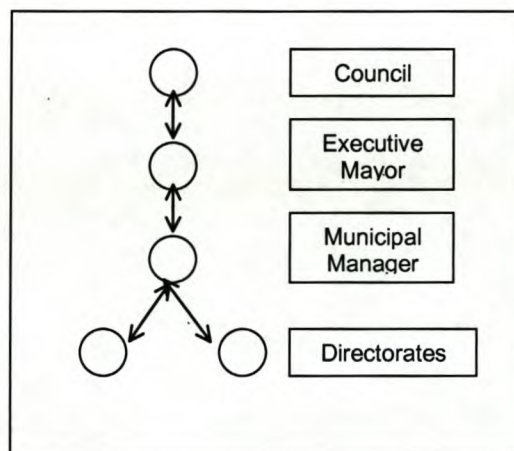
Diagram 8: Organizational structure of the WCDM (West Coast Integrated Development Plan – 2002).



When revisiting the networks of organizational communication (see Chapter 2), it is evident that the wheel and Y-networks are typically found in downward communication. The reason for this is that these networks host a central/ strong leader figure. (Note that the other three networks namely the circle, chain and all-channel networks have no leader and authority is distributed equally among all members). These networks facilitate easy access for the leader figure to communicate with the other people. The latter do not have the same access to communicate with each other. As mentioned earlier, the WCD project findings revealed downward communication tendencies, and the conclusion that could be drawn is that the communication networks will be wheel or y-networks.

When looking at the organisational structure of the District Municipality in the diagram above the y-network can be depicted (see diagram below). The central leader figure (i.e. the Municipal Manager) is the person with access to communicating with all the other parties in the network. The Council and directorates are constrained in terms of their ability to communicate with other parties due to their positioning in this network and can only communicate with one other party. The Executive Mayor on the other hand, has access to both parties on the executive management level (i.e. Council and the Municipal Manager) but is limited in terms of communication with the directorates running the risk of isolating itself from the operational aspects of the municipal organisation. Diagram 19 illustrates the y-network structure (Mersham & Skinner, 2001:48-49), which is evident in flow of communication between the various organizational management levels of the WC District Municipality.

Diagram 19 : Y-network communication flow structure in the WC District Municipality (adapted from Mersham & Skinner, 2001:48-49).



Although much emphasis has been placed on downward communication thus far the notion of upward communication should not be ignored. As mentioned earlier in any organization downward flows also tend to be more frequent than upward flows. This point was argued as the influence of organizational structure on communication flows was discussed and the conclusion was drawn that due to

the bureaucratic nature and the function of such structure, communication flows in the WC municipalities tend to be directed in a downwards.

Upward communication remains important to effective communication in terms of the feedback and response to downward communication that it provides. Mersham and Skinner (2001:45) provide a few suggestions on the strengthening of upward communication flow in any organisation. These suggestions include the following:

- To encourage a culture of open communication
- To establish convenient and user friendly channels to enable employees at lower levels to communicate with management
- To create opportunities for employees to voice their opinions and their complaints anonymously, for example suggestion boxes.
- To introduce incentive schemes and reward systems for individuals who made savings and came up with new ideas that can be implemented.
- To identify gate-keepers who prevent important information from flowing throughout the organizational hierarchy.
- To be prepared to listen effectively and to react positively and quickly to suggestions.

4.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In the light of the above analyses a few observations can be made. Firstly, corporate communication supports community communication. In the analyses it was evident that internal communication in municipalities ensure that communication among officials are effective, which is crucial for service delivery. It can be concluded that effective corporate communication strengthens the institutions facilitating community participation. In improving corporate communication a support base for community communication is established.

Secondly, community communication is vital in strengthening and improving public participation. By making new information available to the community, community members are enabled to be informed and capacitated to make decisions on matters affecting their own lives. This adds quality to the participation process and sustains development.

Thirdly, it can be concluded that participation only becomes meaningful to people if they can have a say, especially in matters affecting their lives. When people have a say in local government matters their participation in local government affairs increase, and they become part of the decision-making processes in local government. By making provision for people to provide feedback on local issues allows them to communicate crucial community needs and issue which local government must take cognisance of. The feedback therefore conveys important developmental information and assist local municipalities in performing their core functions.

Local municipalities should also be very clear about the intended objective(s) of participation. As explained in this chapter, public participation can be informative, consultative and interactive. Depending on the specific objectives of the participation approach, municipalities should choose the form of participation most suitable. Municipalities should know beforehand the intended results of participation, and should then choose a suitable participation approach based on these intended results.

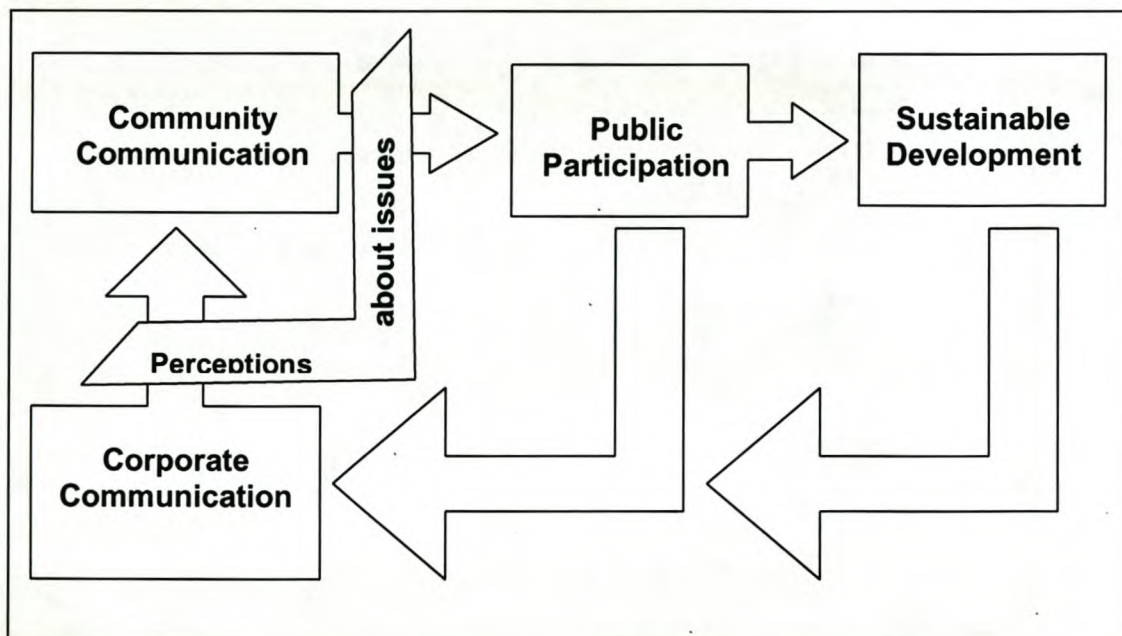
CHAPTER 5

COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCED PARTICIPATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the case for dealing with perceptions about issues, relevant community communication and appropriate corporate communication for public participation in sustainable development was argued. It was stated that corporate communication supports community communication institutionally. Community communication in turn enables communities to be informed and to participate in local government. Perceptions about community issues and concerns are important enablers or barriers to both forms of communication as well as the participation process. A communication framework should therefore address such perceptions. Without due consideration for these perceptions, even the most relevant and appropriate communication strategies for participation will fail. Diagram 14 (also refer to Chapter 3) illustrates this reality.

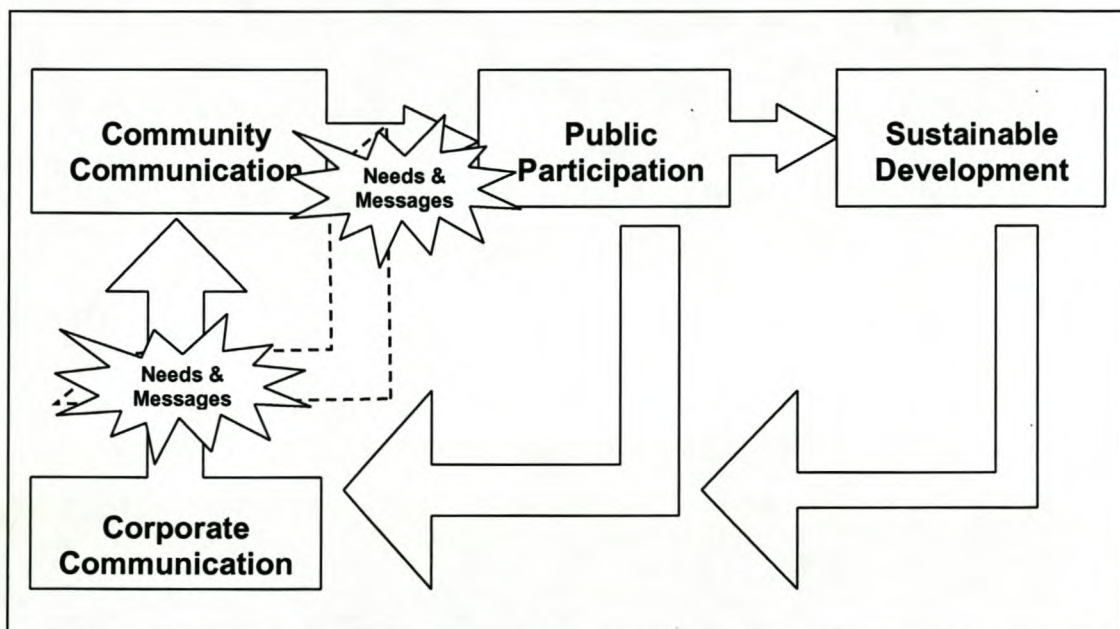
Diagram 14: Community issues, communication, participation and development.



The above diagram (Diagram 14) also reveals that corporate communication within the municipality supports community communication. Good community communication enhances effective public participation, which is an important building block of sustainable development (Meyer & Theron, 2000:5). Perceptions and issues, if not dealt with correctly, may act as barriers preventing effective community communication and corporate communication from taking place. Public participation due its relationship with communication also suffers if issues and perceptions continue to block communication.

However, when issues and perceptions are turned into positive forces, and its effect on communication and participation is reversed, it can act as enablers for effective communication and participation. By turning issues and perceptions into communication needs and messages, positive driving factors for communication and participation are being created. Diagram 20 illustrates this proposition showing how perceptions and issues can be turned into needs and messages enabling communication, participation. The next subsection will explore this proposition.

Diagram 20: Community needs, communication, participation and development.



5.2 DEALING WITH PERCEPTIONS ABOUT COMMUNITY ISSUES

According to Fielding (1993:99) the following points serve to positively deal with perceptions:

- Community members should be assisted to have a clear understanding of their perceptual biases,
- The municipality should strive to create supportive and friendly situations aimed at co-operation,
- A willingness to work together towards realising communal goals must be developed,
- Officials should give credit to ordinary people not known for particular knowledge or special capabilities but who can still contribute meaningfully, and
- Officials should make special effort to understand the perceptions held by departments other than their own.

5.3 IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY NEEDS

The devising of a communication and participation strategy is structured around the needs of a community if it can be succeeded to change perceptions about issues and issues itself into needs. Community needs are therefore not merely vague feelings or feelings of discomfort. A clearly contextualised and demarcated need must be identifiable in order for it to be properly addressed (Swanepoel, 1997:108). Once a community is able to identify their needs they are already starting to address it.

5.3.1 Needs Identification and Formulation

According to Fourie (1982:10) it is the responsibility of the communicator (in this thesis the municipality) to determine and to study or identify all the needs of its destination (in this thesis the community). The process of needs identification

usually start with an (a) informal phase of initial contact making with the community members, followed by a more (b) formal phase during which needs are clearly and specifically formulated (Swanepoel, 1997:108).

(a) Informal Phase

The informal process of needs identification should take place in an informal manner through discussion as in focus groups. It is not advisable that needs discussions should be open discussions, for example during a public meeting. Various groups might hold irreconcilable opinions, which in turn might lead to animosity between the groups. Only once consensus on the need is reached among the people in the group, can the formal phase be initiated (Swanepoel, 1997:109-110).

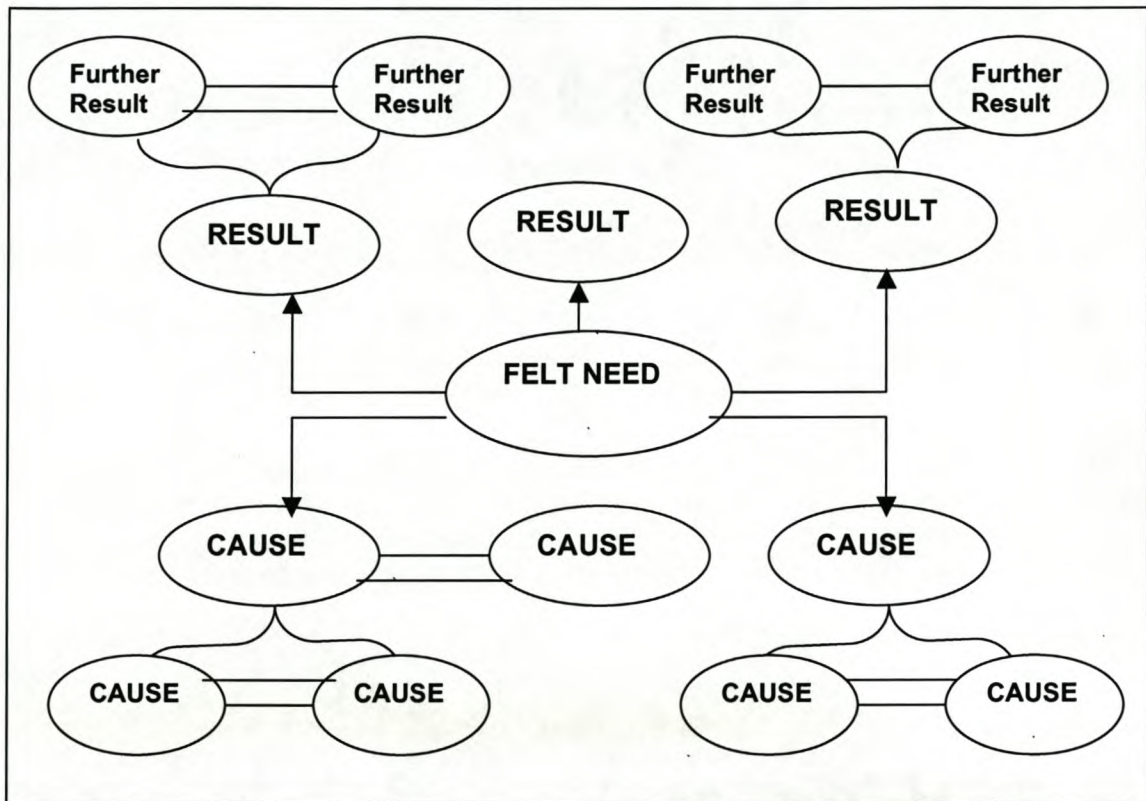
(b) Formal Phase

During the formal phase the participants will not be the community at large, but only those individuals who have identified themselves as having specific concerns. The group of concerned individuals is often referred to as the potential action group for the project. Community members may hold different perceptions of the same needs, or might be concerned about totally different needs. It is vital that the different needs must be identified and if there are different perceptions on the same needs, such differences in opinion must be discussed and resolved (Swanepoel, 1997:109-110).

It is crucial that the people experience the need as a felt need and have identified it as their own. Also, needs have to be formulated specifically. In order to demystify complex felt needs, a causality and linkage exercise can be useful. A causality and linkage exercise can be illustrated by Diagram 21 through a spider diagram (Swanepoel, 1997:110-111). This exercise is aimed at establishing causes and results of needs experienced by the community and establish the mutual relationships between causes and results of various needs. The causal

links between the various needs are interrelated and if one need can be eradicated this will eliminate other needs as well (Swanepoel, 1997:110).

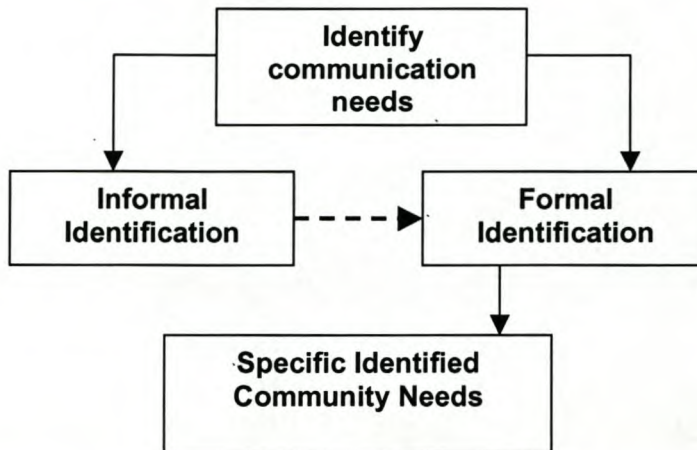
Diagram 21: A causality and linkage exercise (Swanepoel, 1997:110-111).



When conducting this exercise it is suggested that it be conducted as a group exercise with the community members. It is advised that a blackboard or a flip chart should be used to allow the entire group to participate (Swanepoel, 1997:111). The ultimate goal of this exercise is to clearly formulate felt needs and eliminate complicating aspects to obtain clearly formulated real needs agreed upon by all interested community members.

The needs identification process as described above is summarised and illustrated by Diagram 22 below (Fourie, 1982:142).

Diagram 22: The needs identification process (Fourie, 1982:142).



5.4 FORMULATING COMMUNICATION MESSAGES

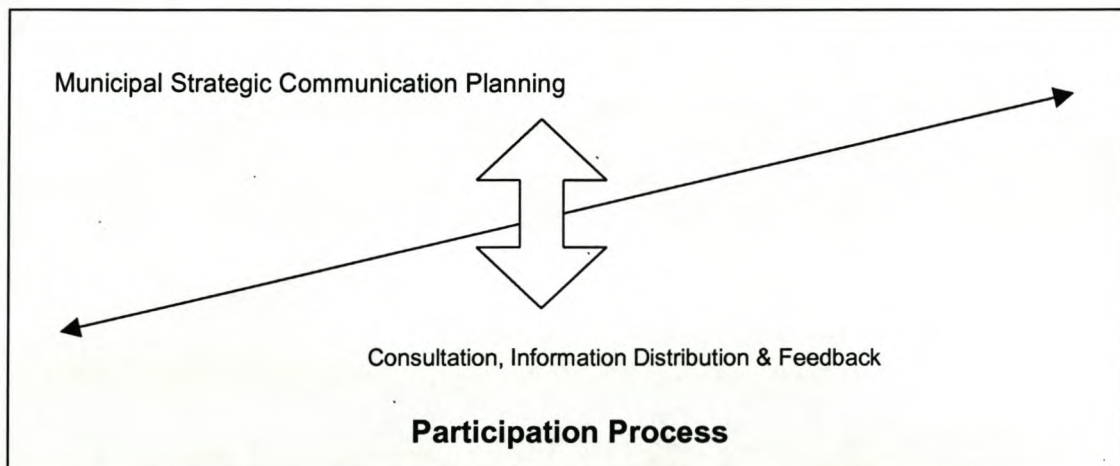
Once community needs have been specified and formulated, the communication messages can be ascertained. Messages are generated by expressed needs and will be received by the community who has a need for them. If the messages are not derived from community needs (i.e. if the messages were not created by the needs), people will have no need for them and will not accept it on a communication level (Fourie, 1982:11,16).

Messages therefore embody the receiver's needs and it is crucial that municipalities consult community members to obtain and formulate their needs before a communication strategy is devised. When community members were consulted in the West Coast District (WCD) Project the findings revealed that their desired messages were very similar to their communication needs, which proves that community needs set the agenda for the formulation of messages. Communication messages are therefore formulated using community needs as a point of departure.

Diagram 18 the relationship between (i) municipal communication strategy planning as well as (ii) community information distribution and feedback is

illustrated (adapted from Schwella et al, 1996:189 and PMI Standards Committee/ Duncan, 1996:103). Diagram 23 reveals that in the initial stages of a development initiative most of the effort goes into planning, but even communication strategy planning cannot be done without the necessary consultation with the community. Conversely, as the process of participation progresses, more effort goes into consultation, information distribution and feedback, but this then serves to influence the strategy.

*Diagram 23: Relationship between **strategic communication planning** and **consultation, information distribution and feedback** (adapted from Schwella et al, 1996:189 and PMI Standards Committee/ Duncan, 1996:103).*

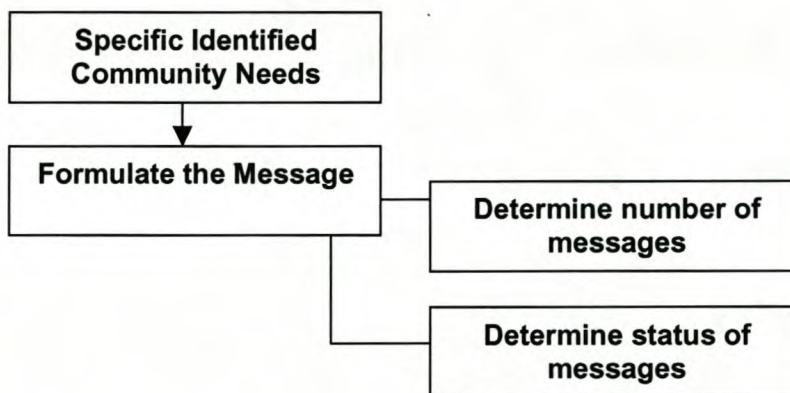


When formulating messages for communication the following should be kept in mind (Fourie, 1982:16-17):

- Messages should be brief, specific and clear.
- Messages should be directly related to the formulated needs.
- Messages should be ranked in order of importance depending on the priority or status of the messages.
- The number of messages should be restricted to a minimum.
- Messages should satisfy the needs in question.

The process of formulating messages as described above is summarised and illustrated by Diagram 24 (Fourie 1982:142). After the community messages have been formulated, the underlying aspects that the municipality has to address should be identified, in order to clarify the objectives of communication. This will also provide strategic direction to municipalities to aid them in addressing the community needs.

Diagram 24: Formulation of messages (Fourie, 1982:143).



5.5 FORMULATING COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

The needs that are generated by the community members are typical reflections of their own daily challenges and problems. Many of these problems pertain to local government functions and other legal obligations (Act 108 of 1996) and can therefore, once identified, be addressed by municipalities. This identification of municipal aspects will provide the condition or action that will satisfy the communication need. The formulation of the communication objectives should be directly related to the communication needs (Fourie, 1982:30) and also to municipal functions and other legal obligations. In order for municipalities to address these needs and problems appropriately they need to know how these aspects relate to the local government functions.

In local government there are specific functions that municipalities have to perform. In terms of the Constitution, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) local government has meet the following objectives:

- To provide democratic and accountable government for local communities,
- To ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner,
- To promote social and economic development,
- To promote a safe and healthy environment, and
- To encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

The above-mentioned objectives constitute the core functions of local government. Local government is constitutionally obliged to adhere to these requirements that renders these requirements as an unbiased and universal tool to classify community needs. Community needs can be classified and grouped according to the core functions of municipalities. The classification of issues into categories that are directly linked to the municipal functions will also be an indication for municipalities of the way in which they should address community needs. The classification of issues into categories directly linked to municipal core functions motivates issues in terms of their importance.

In order to ensure that the classification of issues is not too narrow and stringent and accommodate a fairly representative spectrum, it should be borne in mind that the constitution also defines local government 'matters', that are generally an administrative by nature (Schedule 5, Part B). This includes matters like beaches, cemeteries, markets and abattoirs. They only indirectly and incidentally effect the discharge of local governments key objects: service delivery, social and economic development and local health provision. In other words, they are not central to defining a local development agenda. However, no community need should be ignored based on arguments that it falls outside the municipal

mandate. This holds true, even if the need is related to a particular service that is the responsibility of another sphere of government. Table 7 is a suggested tool for classifying community objectives into workable classifications that municipalities can identify with and act upon.

	Social Development	Economic Development	Service Delivery	Other
Objective 1				
Objective 2				
Objective 3				

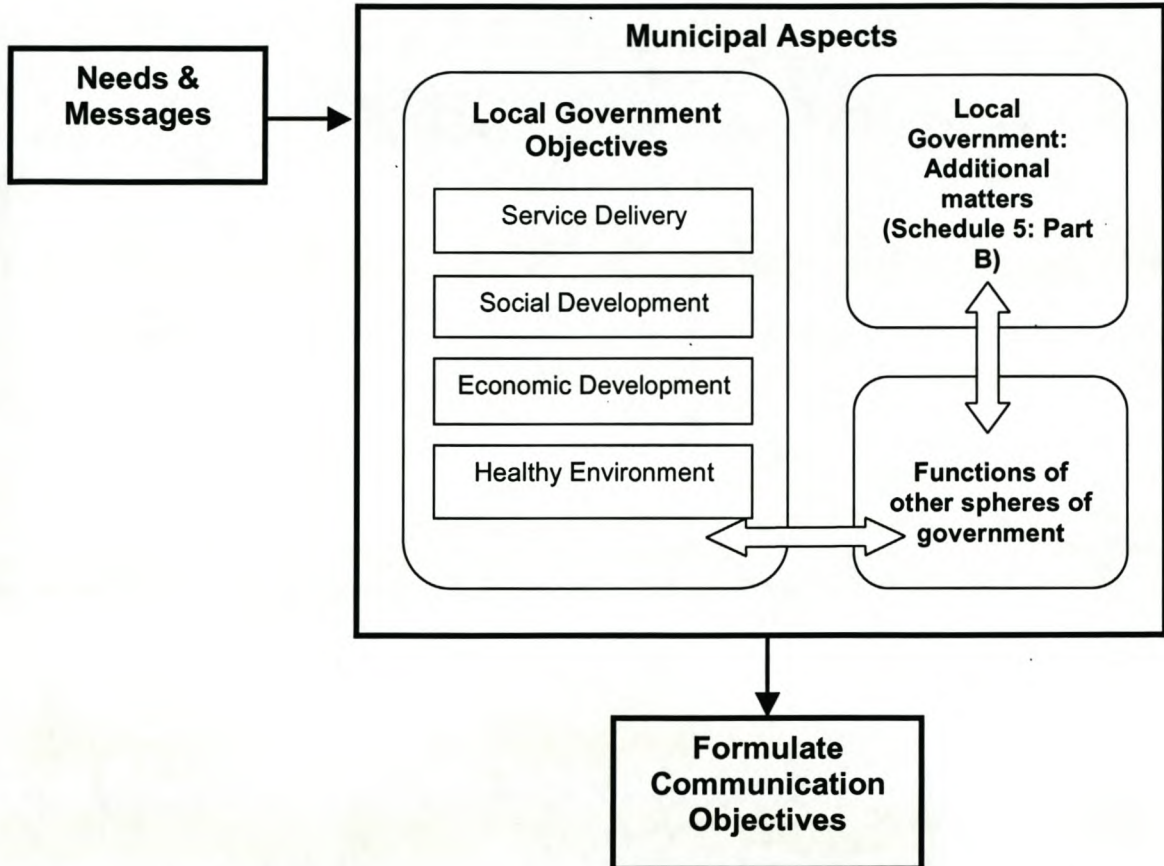
Table 7: Classification of community objectives.

When formulating the communication objectives the following prerequisites should be present:

- The municipality should be honest and inquire into the reason for wanting to reach a specific objective.
- The objective should be measurable, i.e. there should be criteria by which it is possible to gauge the success or failure of an objective.
- Objectives should be viable and attainable.
- When formulating objectives combinations should be avoided, i.e. each objective should be formulated independently.
- There should be alternative objectives, which should be ranked in order of acceptability.
- The municipality should develop some degree of flexibility in the planning and execution of the communication strategy, especially because communication is a change agent.
- When formulating the objective it should be kept in mind that the message and the objective can be one and the same thing.

The identification of municipal aspects and the formulation of communication messages are illustrated in Diagram 25 (Fourie, 1982:144).

Diagram 25: Formulation of communication objectives (Fourie 1982:144).



When the objectives for the messages have been formulated, the municipality should analyse the media through which the messages are to be conveyed to the community. As mentioned in the previous two chapters the media for development and corporate communication are very divergent. The two communication types and their corresponding media will be discussed separately.

5.6 RELEVANT COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION: MEDIA ANALYSIS

The selection of media can be a confusing process because different factors need to be taken into account. One such factor is the recipient or audience, in this thesis the community and the internal municipal officials. The distinctions between the two communication types used for these two audiences have been made in the previous chapter under section 4.2 and 4.2.4, as well as the media suitable for each communication type identified. This subsection is focussed at providing an analysis of the media for each of the two communication types, the pre-conditions for the use of specific media and the effect of the chosen media on the communication flow.

Table 8 represents a summary of possible options in terms of community communication media, methods to practically implement the media (Barker, 2001), the circumstances under which these media and methods must be applied as well as the directive flow of the communicated message.

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION			
Channel	Methods	Application	Flow
Publications			
Community printed media	Community and local newspapers; Notices, Information packs	Information and Innovation dissemination When the flow of communication is one-way (usually top-down) and when passive/informative community participation is to be obtained. In this instance it is not necessary to obtain feedback from the community. <u>Example:</u> to distribute municipal information regarding housing policies or by-laws, information about service accounts or local elections.	One way: To Community
Outdoor hoarding and advertising	Road shows; megaphone; street campaigns		

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION			
Channel	Methods	Application	Flow
Public Media			
Information Dissemination Points	Information Office, Library, Community structures, Community events, Local municipality, Market Places, Shopping centers, Religious venues (i.e. churches/ temples/ synagogues/ mosques).	Information and innovation dissemination (Same as above) In this instance the municipality will leave information documents at central accessible places for the community to collect.	One way: To Community
Information Dissemination Material	Pamphlets; posters; booklets; leaflets		
Structured Interactive Conversations			
Interactive/ Participatory Media	Industrial and Street Theatre Film and video Photo Novella Community Radio Telephonic communication: municipal call centre	Participative interaction When the flow of communication is two-way. Information will be conveyed to the community and in turn the latter will respond by giving feedback information. In this instance the response of the community is vital and will influence decision-making. <u>Example:</u> Discussions about proposed local economical development projects.	One way: To Community Horizontal (Between community members).

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION			
Channel	Methods	Application	Flow
Community/ Societal Structures	Church/ Temple/ Synagogue/ Mosque; Traditional and Cultural Ceremonies		
Community Set-off points	Commuter stands (Taxi- ranks/Bus stops/Train Stations); Shopping centers and malls; Market places		
Electronic Media			
Community Networking	On-line facilities (E-mail; Internet)	Participative interaction (Same as above)	One way: To Community.
	Cellular telephones		Horizontal (Between community members).

Table 8: Media analyses for community communication.

5.6.1 Implications of Community Communication Media

Community communication media provide a specific vehicle for local communities to interact with their municipalities. One of the implications of the use of these media is that the use of community (or development) communication media has the potential to effectively reach more people. The

target groups of community communication do not always have access to technology and by using appropriate and context related media, more people can be reached and enabled to communicate with local government (Barker, 2001:9).

Secondly, the media that are selected reveals an understanding for participative communication and for the unique demands of the developmental context as opposed to the corporate context. This prepares the way for more effective community participation as more people are engaged in dialogue with local government, and the latter adopts a learning culture in respect of community needs and circumstances (Kotze, 1997:43).

Lastly, messages conveyed through community communication media should be needs-based and should therefore acknowledge the interdependent relationship between the municipality and the community (Barker, 2001:12).

5.6.2 Communication with Communities: Do's and Don'ts

Swanepoel and De Beer (1996:5-6) pointed out a few key points to keep in mind when communicating with communities. Some of these pointers include the following:

- Avoid the use of racist or sexist terminology.
- Focus on the common goals of the communication event and avoid get involved in argumentative conversations.
- Respond honestly to questions and queries from community members.
- Be convinced about the message to be communicated (and act accordingly).
- Be flexible to adapt to various circumstances.
- Create a comfortable atmosphere that will encourage open conversation.
- Use simple language and speak and write clearly.
- Ensure that body language corresponds with the message that you are trying to bring across.

- Be sure to be alert to the receiver's body language and adjust your words and the way in which you bring your message across accordingly.
- Avoid discussions about politics and religion but deal with it appropriately when it does appear.
- Prepare yourself thoroughly if you are expected to explain a difficult concept.
- Do not be aggressive.
- Do not embarrass people or put them on the spot.
- Listen actively and attentively.
- Make use of an interpreter if the situation requires it.
- Get feedback to find out whether or not your message was understood correctly.
- Use visual aids when necessary.

5.7 APPROPRIATE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION: MEDIA ANALYSIS

It was mentioned earlier that corporate communication support community communication. As pointed out earlier (see Chapter 2 under Corporate Communication) the media employed are different from the media employed during community communication due to the divergent natures of the two communication types.

Table 9 presents a summary of possible options in terms of corporate communication media, methods to practically implement the media (Barker, 2001), the circumstances under which these media and methods must be applied as well as the directive flow of the communicated message.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION			
Channel	Methods	Application	Flow
Publications			
Newsletter	E-mail; Hand-outs	When communicating information internally (staff) and externally (community). The communication flow is one-way and the aim is to get information across. With this type of communication feedback is not required. <u>Example:</u> Internally, to disseminate information about staff and operational issues. Externally when communicating municipal information to the community (projects, and services).	Vertical (Downwards).
Advertisements	E-mail; Hand-outs; News papers; Local Community Radio; Electronic Bill Boards, Notice Boards, Brochures/ Booklets	When wanting to market and promote the image of the local municipality with the focus on tourism and economic development. Also to inform the community about important municipal events, changes in municipal procedures and information relating to services. <u>Example:</u> To inform the community about area marketing and tourism events (e.g. festivals), local and national election results and procedures, as well as community events.	
Press Releases & Feature Articles	News Papers and other printed media	When specifically wanting to market and promote the image of the local municipality and its Council. Also when critical and politically sensitive communication needs to	

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION			
Channel	Methods	Application	Flow
		go out and public statements need to be made. <u>Example:</u> To disseminate information about the newly elected Council and their portfolios.	
Structured Interactive Conversations			
Meetings and Workshops		When it is required that information needs to go out to target groups of people. This scenario also requires feedback. The type of information distributed is determined by whether the target audience is internal (staff) or external (community).	Vertical (Upwards and downwards) Horizontal
External	Community Group Presentations		
	Community Workshops		
	Public Meetings		
Internal	Departmental Meetings		
	Staff Information Sessions	<u>Example:</u> When distributing information about national training and integrated development planning (staff). When informing the community about development projects (e.g. housing, opportunities for public-private partnerships).	
	Tele-conferencing facilities		
Public Media			
External			
Information Dissemination	Bulletin Boards; (Electronic) Bill Boards; Municipal Calender	When it is required for the municipality to communicate with the public or community at large. The information communicated is intended for an external audience and contains information about municipal affairs that the public/ community needs to know in order to be informed.	Vertical (Downwards)

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION			
Channel	Methods	Application	Flow
		<u>Example:</u> Information about proposed roads, water restrictions and environmental by-laws.	
Internal			
Intra-personal	Notice Boards	Internal When it is necessary to communicate information internally to municipal staff. In this instance the messages are intended for the internal audience and contains operational instructions and information. <u>Example:</u> Organizational issues such as restructuring, internal policy regarding personnel issues (e.g. leave policies), departmental operational activities and tasks (i.e. day-to day tasks) as well as national and provincial legislation.	Vertical (Downwards)
Interpersonal	Intranet (e-mail)		
Group	Municipal Web Page		
Organizational	Telephone		
	Face to face		
	Formal Letters		
Research (Community Information)			
Participation Action Research	Semi-structured interviews	Extracting information form the community is one way in which crucial community information is obtained. This information forms the basis of any communication and participation strategy.	Vertical (Upwards)
	Community Focus and Liaison Groups		
	Social Profile and Surveillance		
Electronic Media			
E-Government	E-mail; Internet, electronic technology	When local government need to communicate frequently and speedily with other levels of government (provincial and national). Internally, when	Vertical (Up and downwards) Horizontal

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION			
Channel	Methods	Application	Flow
		communication with staff and among staff is necessary (e.g. intranet). When wanting to store and maintain internal data. <u>Example:</u> Communicating policies and legislation, staff issues, financial information database and archives.	
Electronic Suggestion Box	Web-site (FAQ's; Suggestions; Complaints; Enquiries).	When it is necessary to obtain feedback from external role players such as the community. This enables the municipality to obtain feedback on previous communication.	Vertical (Upwards)

Table 9: Media analyses for corporate communication.

5.7.1 Principles of Employee Communication

Mersham and Skinner (2001:68-69) pointed out a few principles that are central to effective corporate communication. This includes the following:

- Communication is an important management component and should be regarded as a key contributor to, and source of influence in terms of employee understanding of municipal issues.
- Commitment by top management to open and honest communication is as important as their participation and support of the communication process.
- A communication strategy is essential and serves to plan and strategise communication. This includes the development of a strategic plan, including short and long term goals, which ideally should be revised annually.

- Managers are the key catalysts for effective communication and the system must recognise their need for information, training and rewards for good communication performance.
- Priority issues should constitute the content of management communication programmes and should be discussed openly using various channels of communication.
- Regular evaluation is key to ensuring effective communication. The communication function should be evaluated periodically to test its effectiveness in terms of directing improvements.

5.7.2 Building Employee Relations

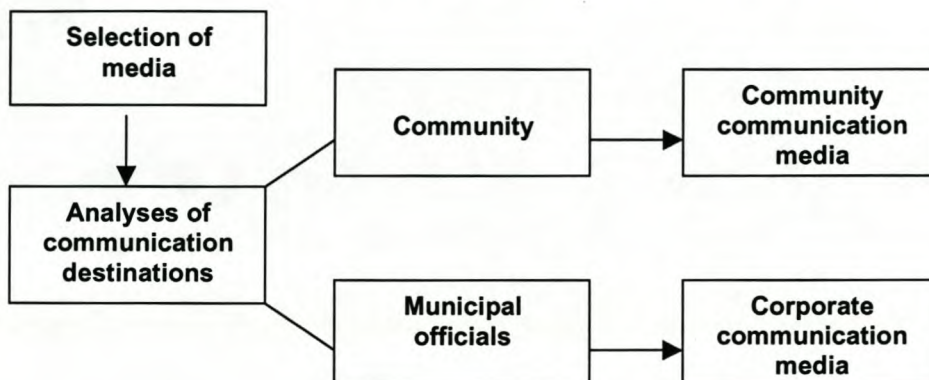
By building relations with employees better communication is established. Methods for improving relations with staff may include the following

(Mersham & Skinner, 2001:85-86):

- Open days for employees and their families provide opportunities for improving organization morale. This creates an informal environment where managers and employees can improve their perception and understanding of the municipality and its operation.
- Visits by senior executives to departments and plants provide opportunity for informal talks and improves two-way communication.
- Departmental or inter-governmental relations improves liaison between departments and spheres of government. Other opportunities to improve intergovernmental and interdepartmental communication are social events and national conventions.
- Meetings of management and employees provide management with the opportunity to discuss new policies, methods and internal problems with employees.
- Service awards serve as recognition of the employee's years of service at the municipality, and are appreciated by the recipient and builds up morale.

The process of selection and choice of communication media as discussed above can be summarised and illustrated as follow:

Diagram 26: Communication media analyses (Fourie, 1982: 154-156).



5.8 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

In order to communicate effectively, a number of communication skills are required. In communication studies some of the skills include the ability to listen actively, the ability to be sensitive to non-verbal communication signs, as well as the ability to understand the various cultural dimensions in the workplace. Table 10 presents some of the technical skills required when communicating with individuals.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS		
<i>Listening</i>	<i>Non-Verbal</i>	<i>Inter-cultural</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for effective listening • Techniques to effective listening • Ensuring that the speaker is effective in bringing across the message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to be sensitive to non-verbal cues • Differences between verbal and non-verbal communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to improve effective intercultural communication

Table 10: Communication skills (Fielding, 1993).

5.8.1 Listening Skills

Communication involves the art of listening which includes paying careful attention to what the other person is saying, absorbing the information provided, thinking about it and acting upon it (VanStaden et al, 2002:42).

5.8.1.1 Importance of Effective Listening

According to Fielding (1993:105), before embarking on efforts to improve listening skills the importance thereof and its implications for communication, needs to be highlighted:

- People tend to be more open to persuasion when talking face-to-face with somebody.
- People have less time to evaluate.
- People are less inclined to be critical in face-to-face situations.
- Poor listening stops the flow of conversation.
- Poor listening often results into poor understanding.

5.8.1.2 Techniques for Improving Effective Listening

The following suggestions may be useful in improving personal listening skills (Fielding, 1993:108-109):

- Make a decision on exactly why you are listening. The following checklist regarding reasons for listening could be employed:
 - Gather the main ideas.
 - Understand and interpret the material properly.
 - Evaluate and apply the new information.
 - Be alert as to whether or not the speaker is logical.
 - Analyse the persuasive techniques of the speaker.
 - Decide how the speaker feel about his/ her ideas.

- Regard listening as a physical and mental process.
- Prove that you are listening by giving non-verbal feedback.
- Listen until the speaker is finished, then respond. Do not jump to conclusions before the full message is over.
- Apply empathetic listening, i.e. listening from the speaker's point of view.
- Check the meanings of words used by the speaker to ensure that you share the same meanings.
- We can think faster than we speak. Use this listening time to summarize key points of the conversation.
- Respect the feelings of the speaker.
- Ask questions to clarify discussion points.
- Ask yourself whether or not the opinions of the speaker are sound.
- Reflect the message back to the speaker to check if you understood him/her accurately.

5.8.2 Non-verbal Communication Skills

Non-verbal communication involves the application of means other than words to transfer a message. Non-verbal communication means include the use of facial expressions, gestures, sign language, objects or clothing (Van Staden et al, 2002:26).

5.8.2.1 Importance of Non-verbal Communication

In the work environment it is important to be sensitive for non-verbal cues. These non-verbal cues and assumptions are important for a number of reasons, including the following (Fielding, 1993:113):

- In unknown situations, people often rely on first impressions to make up their minds about strangers. They tend to use superficial cues to make all kinds of judgements, which are often incorrect.

- People also tend to use their own beliefs about appearance to judge other people. Although these beliefs may be inaccurate, people use them to fill in gaps about strangers.
- First impressions of people are often difficult to change. People tend to make up their minds about people based on their facial expressions, eye contact, voice, gestures, the way they carry their bodies and what they wear.
- Non-verbal stereotypes like short people are aggressive are often used by to judge people. When we use these assumptions while communicating with people communication problems emerges.

5.8.2.2 Interpretation of Non-verbal Communication

Fielding (1993:114) identified three prominent problems that may occur during the interpretation of non-verbal communication namely:

- Non-verbal communication can be ambiguous.
- The meaning of any non-verbal message needs to be established from the total context, rather from the behaviour on its own.
- Non-verbal signs must be interpreted in groups of signs, rather than individually.

5.8.3 Intercultural Communication Skills

Brislin in Gudykunst (1986:81-82) suggest specific conditions that may be applied to intercultural contact amongst groups in the organization in order to stimulate effective communication. This includes the following:

- **Equal status contact.** This implies that no group should be thought of as having more power or access to greater rewards than another.
- **Intimate contact.** Participants need the opportunity to share intimate thoughts or inner feelings, as opposed to having formally structured relationships at all times.

- **Super-ordinate goals.** There is a need for goals that are perceived to be valuable to all representatives but cannot be achieved solely by one group or representative.
- **Organizational or Administrative support.** The desire to improve intergroup relationship must be important to all representatives and a firm policy supported by top management.

5.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summarising the above analyses, the following observations can be made. Firstly, that community perceptions can be converted into community needs, which will later become the messages or content of communication. Where perceptions previously hindered effective communication (i.e. community and corporate communication) as well as participation from taking place, changing perceptions into needs convert such perceptions into enablers for participation and ultimately sustainable development.

Secondly, the establishment of needs gives rise to two other important aspects of communication namely the messages and the objectives. Communication messages contain the community's needs and therefore consultation with the community is essential. It was also observed that in the initial stages the level of municipal planning and communication strategising is high in comparison to the level of consultation and information distribution to the community information distribution. As community consultation and information distribution increases, municipal planning and strategising will decrease.

Objectives for communication messages should be established once community messages have been formulated. Communication objectives are directly related to needs and messages. The core functions of local government as they are described in the Constitution, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) can be used as a guide to

divide objectives into workable classifications to enable municipalities to address it properly.

Thirdly, the media employed for community communication differs from that of corporate communication and the choice of media for each communication type will be different. The reason for this can be ascribed to the divergent natures of the two communication types.

Fourthly, communication skills play an important role in effective communication. The latter requires specific skills such as ability to listen actively, the ability to be sensitive to non-verbal communicative signs, as well as the ability to understand cultural dimensions.

CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 SUMMARY

It is clear that communication theory as it is applied in the organizational context, also has a place within the developmental context. Community communication supports development initiatives and provides context specific communication media whereby communities can be reached and enabled to reach out to. Organizational communication also has a role to play in developmental initiatives by supporting the internal administration of municipalities and possibly other developmental institutions and by facilitating the flow of internal information. It can therefore be argued that both organizational and community communication is crucial to the successful implementation of a communication framework - the former ensures internal information flow while the latter ensures external flow of information.

Once effective communication measures are implemented and information can reach both internal (municipal) and external (community) institutions, participation can be enhanced. By enabling communities to make informed decisions renders possible meaningful inputs and participation in municipal and developmental initiatives. Municipalities can respond to community inputs more effectively if they have the necessary internal administrative information, which also improves meaningful participation.

6.2 CONCLUSION

Based on the arguments mentioned in the previous chapters of this thesis, a few significant conclusions can be drawn. It was found that there could be no successful community communication strategy enhancing participation if the community perceptions (toned by local issues and concerns) are ignored or

avoided. Local issues and concerns need to be addressed for people to be willing to participate meaningfully.

The perceptions and issues preventing successful community participation for enhanced participation can also not be addressed without an appropriate corporate communication strategy. The latter is aimed at ensuring that all officials understand the issues at stake, the community communication strategy and the development purposes of participation.

Corporate communication supports community communication. In the analyses it was evident that internal communication in municipalities ensure that communication among officials are effective, which is crucial for service delivery. It can be concluded that effective corporate communication strengthens the institutions facilitating community participation.

Community communication is vital in strengthening and improving public participation. By transmitting new information to the community, communities are enabled to be informed and enhance their capability to make decisions on matters affecting their own lives.

Participation only becomes meaningful to people if they can have a say, especially in matters affecting their lives. When people have a say in local government matters, their involvement increase and they become part of decision-making processes in local government.

Municipalities should know beforehand the intended results of participation, and should then choose a suitable participation approach based on these intended results. Local municipalities should also be very clear about the intended objective(s) of participation. Municipalities should choose the most suitable form or level of public participation, depending on the specific participation objectives.

Community perceptions can be converted into community needs, which will later become the messages or content of communication. Where perceptions previously hindered effective communication (i.e. community and corporate communication) as well as participation from taking place, changing perceptions into needs convert such perceptions into enablers for participation and ultimately sustainable development.

It was also observed that in the initial stages the level of municipal planning and communication strategising is high in comparison to the level of consultation and information distribution to the community information distribution. As community consultation and information distribution increases, municipal planning and strategising will decrease.

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